PEEPS AT MANY LANDS

# KASHMIR

BY

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WITH TWELVE FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS
IN COLOUR
BY
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LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1911

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SKETCH MAP OF KASHMIR

# KASHMIR

## CHAPTER I

### "Off to Kashmir"

There are many travellers at the present time who are fortunate enough to journey East and West. The North and South Poles even have their visitors. But there are still a great majority who cannot, for various reasons, even hope to cross the Channel. For their sake those of their countrymen who have the privilege of foreign travel try to describe by pen, brush, and camera the interests and charms with which either professional duty or leisurely trips have made them familiar.

In the old fairy stories we all love, who does not remember the travelling carpet, and how it transported its owner thousands of miles in a few minutes to whatever place he wished to visit ?

There is always some moral or symbol underlying fairy stories, and the travelling carpet was intended to represent a keen imagination, for we can transport ourselves, by the help of this wonderful department of our minds, to places which we may perhaps never be able to see with any other but our minds' eyes.

These eyes, however, work very well, when trained, so long as correct pictures are drawn for them. So I ask you to step on to the magic carpet and fly with me to Kashmir.

The name of Kashmir is familiar to every educated person, and so it is hardly necessary to add that we must fly to the north of India.

There are some advantages for the carpet traveller—he misses all the miseries of a rough voyage; all the heat and dust and fatigue; all the badly cooked food of the wayside inns;—so he has some compensations for remaining at home.

I can imagine nothing more delightful than to travel through the air, provided there were no danger of disaster, and to swoop down upon Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. But I think we shall get a more distinct idea of its whereabouts if we imagine ourselves to have journeyed to India by steamer, to have landed at Bombay, and, after two days and nights in the hot and dusty train, to have left the railway at Rawal Pindi, a military station in the north-west of the Panjab, and to have packed ourselves with our baggage into a tonga and an ekka for the forty-mile drive to Murree, a hill station 7000 feet above sea-level.

A tonga is a rough two-wheeled cart, on anything but cee-springs. It is open, but has a curved roof, and four people can be seated in it back to back, that is to say, three Europeans and a native driver; but a tonga usually expands if natives engage it, and I have seen a family of eight apparently packed in quite happily. The ponies probably disagreed, and preferred an English load. Two ponies of a nondescript appear-

ance and grooming are harnessed to the tonga, and a clanking steel bar heralds the approach of the vehicle. The ponies are changed every five miles, so is the syce or groom, who perches anywhere he can find room—sometimes on the roof. The driver, in very antique garments, blows a battered horn, from which he produces dismal sounds to warn bullock carts or other obstacles to our progress.

Our bedding, without which one cannot travel in the East, small boxes, and baskets, are tied on with rope. So behold yourself in dust-coat and sola topee (pith hat) arriving at Murree. And now give a sigh of relief as you breathe in the fresh hill air. How delicious it is after all the aroma of Indian railway travel and the hot drive! The ekka is following more slowly, the man servant, a native bearer, in charge, and will bring our heavier baggage.

An ekka is also a two-wheeled cart, chiefly framework and rope-netting, with a tattered red curtain, not for the sake of shelter to our boxes, but for the protection of native women from curious eyes when they travel.

The chief thing which strikes one about both these carts is that they always look very old—almost at the last gasp. I have never met either a new tonga or a new or even second-hand ekka. How amusing it would be if we drove down Piccadilly, or even through our own village or town, in a tonga, an ekka bringing up the rear! A fine crowd would soon collect.

But we can only spend one night in Murree, as there are still 150 miles of tonga-driving before we arrive in Kashmir by the modern route, which is quite different from that followed by the old Mogul

emperors when they travelled from Delhi to Kashmir. There were two routes from the Panjab before the Murree road was engineered. Both of them pass through picturesque country, through fir woods and meadows bright with flowers, and from the high passes magnificent views are caught of the snow mountains.

The Pir Pangal range is especially fine. At various points along the road ruined towers speak eloquently of days when travellers had to be protected from sudden surprises, and the large caravanserais were the halting-places and rest-houses of the old Delhi emperors. They travelled on horseback and in palanquins with large retinues of retainers, and a travelling bazaar, or provision booths, and they took considerably longer than we have since we passed Delhi at midnight three days ago.

Is it to be wondered at that Kashmir, with its snowy heights, deep rivers, and gushing streams, calm lakes and dense forests, flowers and fruits, should, even from so great a distance, have acted as a magnet to eyes which smarted from the dust and ached with the glare of the fierce sun beating on white marble and red sandstone? Kashmir has attracted outsiders for many centuries—are we not here ourselves?—and it will continue to draw visitors for as many more, as far as we can foretell anything.

One of the ancient routes was through the city of Jammu, now the winter capital of the Maharajah of Kashmir, and led over the Banihal Pass some 9000 feet high, but passable even in March, though it is hard going then on account of snow. The other road from the plains of India started from Gujrat

and led over the Pir Pangal Pass 11,000 feet. Some travellers even now vary their journeys to Kashmir by following one or other of these routes, though we are bumping along that most commonly used. The road winds down by zigzag till we get to Kohala, and we pay one rupee toll as we cross the bridge into Kashmir territory and frank our ekka too.

The next halting-stage is Domel, where we sleep a night. Here the two rivers, the Jhelum and the Kishenganga, flow side by side, much in the fashion of the Saône and the Rhone, for a short distance. You can easily distinguish the Jhelum, brown and muddy with the deposit it has gathered in its long course through the Kashmir valley, from the Kishenganga, light green and cold from the snows.

Bernier, the French traveller who wrote about Kashmir in 1665, declared that he was reminded of his own mountains of Auvergne as he gradually mounted from the heat of the plain, finding temperature and vegetation changing as he went.

Travelling from the Panjab to Kashmir in April, we leave ripening wheat behind us, passing on to fields of wheat only in the ear. Higher still we find a few blades just beginning to show, while the trees are only now uncurling their leaves; and yet higher it is still winter, the fields are bare, and snow lies about in shady patches.

The scenery between Domel and Chakoti is wilder and bolder, and the river is narrow, and spanned by only a rope bridge. It seems incredible that such a slight structure can bear the weight of laden men. Twisted ropes of branches, with a central one as footway, are connected with stays of bark. The

natives think nothing of crossing these bridges, but they are terrors to people who have not very strong nerves.

Chakoti dak bungalow (wayside inn) is perched on the hillside, and has a very pretty view down the valley; but even as dak bungalows go it is a poor one. Very different from country inns at home are these Indian makeshifts, and yet one is glad enough of them. They consist usually of four austerely furnished rooms, with the bare necessities for bed and board, and more dust than is necessary. You bring your own bedding, and, on arrival, call for the *Khansamah*, the man in charge. He rolls off a fine menu in answer to your question: "What is there for dinner?" It is not so grand on the table as in mere words, but you are hungry after your tonga-drive, and watery soup, tough chicken, anchovied eggs, and custard pudding are helped down with Worcester sauce and extras from your own *tiffin* (lunch) basket. Besides, Kashmir lies before us, and we shall soon be able to cater for ourselves and give orders to our own cook.

On the way to Uri the road winds along under steep precipices, for it has been cut out of the sheer hillside. In the rainy seasons heavy slips often occur, and the road may be blocked for days. As a rule, one spends two nights on the way from Murree into Kashmir, and the third day we pass Rampur with its great cliffs of limestone rock. Fine deodars grow on these steep cliffs, and farther on one passes the ruins of an old Hindu temple, dating back to A.D. 100.

The tonga route now takes us along a pretty road, often under branching trees, beside the river, which

has now broadened out into a placid stream. Here and there the water dashes up in spray as it rounds rocky edges, then it flows in a clear, brown current eflecting pebbles, or darkening into silent pools under the willow trees.

Fine trees are now plentiful—walnuts, chestnuts, and firs of several kinds. Picturesque wooden huts, with gabled and thatched or wooden roofs, look much more civilised than the flat-roofed mud huts of the plains which we so lately passed.

At last we come to Baramulla, the first large village in Kashmir proper, and the approach to it is almost like a Surrey village on a wide common, the river shining through the trees. Fine plane trees are planted along the banks, and a rough wooden bridge conducts you to the main town across the river. The domed roof of a temple and the background of mountains soon show that it is neither English nor Dutch, as the avenues of poplars might suggest. The houses are very like Swiss chalets in rather a tumble-down condition. Closer acquaintance still further betrays their inferiority, for they are very dirty. "Patch up for to-day, let to-morrow patch for itself," might be an honoured Indian proverb, so closely is it observed.

There are plenty of river craft about. House-boats awaiting tenants; *Doongas*, which are like wide punts with roof and side blinds of rush-mats, also used by travellers. We are reminded of a broad reach of the Thames with bits of Switzerland thrown in.

There is a fine view of Mount Haramouk, which is 16,000 feet high, and the ranges of the Pir Pangal and Kaj-i-Nag form a beautiful background.

Our next move, after a rest in the bungalow on the river, is down the poplar avenues which stretch from Baramulla to Srinagar. They were planted by Nur Mahal, the great Mogul Emperor Jehangir's wife, and are lovely at all times of the year: in the spring when their delicate leaves are a glitter of tender green and silver, through the sober green of summer, till they turn to gold in the autumn's crisp nights, still keeping their silver at the back of their leaves. Even in winter they form avenues of delicate tracery, their straight, slender branches penetrating the landscape as if with notes of admiration at its beauty of form and colour.

And so we come in sight of Srinagar, the City of the Sun, which must have a chapter all to itself, and if you were *bona fide* travellers by this time you would be quite ready for a rest and another meal, having driven twenty miles more.

# CHAPTER II

## Ancient History of Kashmir

The only way to enjoy a new country—new to oneself, that is to say—is to get a grasp of its ancient history, just as visitors to our metropolis should know something of the history of old Britain and old London before they can intelligently go sight-seeing.

Kashmir is such a beautiful country, blest with such a good climate, grand mountains, fine rivers and lakes, so rich for agricultural purposes, and garnished with such lovely wild flowers and fruits, that one exclaims, "Surely the tales of fair Kashmir can be only fairy tales of good kings and happy, prosperous people!"

But this, alas! has not been the past history of the fair valley, though we trust it may be its future. All the old records of Kashmir come from the Sanskrit history which was compiled by an ancient poet. Of course much of this work is veiled in legend, as, for instance, the way in which the people profess to account for the origin of their country. The valley of Kashmir, so sung the bard, had once been a vast lake. Without any geological knowledge he hit on the truth. But the reason

for the drying up of the lake was attributed to supernatural agency.

In all mythological stories the forces of Nature are supposed to be the works of good or evil powers. Sunshine, good harvests, cool springs, fruitful soil, and spells of health are due, they say, to the smiles of the gods; flood and famine, drought and disease, to their frowns or to the works of evil demons or dragons.

The historical legend further states that this vast lake, locked in by mountains from which it was impossible to escape, was the home of the goddess *Pervati*, who lived in the mountain Haramouk, and sailed her boat in the lake now called Wular. This goddess was good and kind. But there also dwelt in the lake a wicked dragon whose presence was shown by the storms which constantly overwhelmed boatmen trying to cross. Good and bad strove together, till at last a grandson of the god Brahma visited the country. He had to live an ascetic life for a thousand years before he was in a fit state to deliver the country from the demon. A little hard, it would seem, on the generations which must still endure!

However, finally he earned what he had so long striven for, and he tried to challenge the demon, who refused to engage in fair fight and hid in the waters of the lake. Whereupon the gods came to the rescue, and, striking the mountains at Baramulla (where, geologically speaking, there was least resistance), made an outlet for the waters (to the truth of which the present gorge and narrow channel are witnesses) and so drained the valley. The demon

serpent still escaped them, however, and hid himself in the water which remained. The gods searched for him by the help of the sun and moon.

At last the goddess Pervati, from her rocky fortress, hurled a small mountain on the spot where she imagined him to be, and killed him. This mountain can still be seen, say the people, for it is the hill on which the fort Hari Parbat was built. After such assistance from the gods the country, now a fertile valley, invited men to live in it; lesser demons still troubling it were also routed, and so arose the kingdom of Kashmir.

This is called the prehistoric period, for it is the time before any genuine history can be traced. The first of any reliable records dates back to 2000 B.C. Which fact alone makes the story of Kashmir one to command our interest and respect.

Kashmir, in spite of its natural advantages, started in the race of life heavily handicapped by those very things which seemed to be but fairy gifts. As in the old stories, there was a bad as well as a good fairy attending its birth, and this witch wove bad spells into the robe which should have been all radiant and fair, so lavish had been the good fairy gifts. The very fact of being all that it was attracted other less fortunate neighbours to help themselves to its luxuries.

A spoilt child is generally a weak one, while one who has been brought up in surroundings in which it gets some hard knocks is of tougher fibre; and so it proved in the case of Kashmir and those countries within reach of it.

The Kashmiris had but to scratch seed into the

soil and it produced abundant harvests, while people from less favoured climates and countries had to toil hard, fighting barren soil, burning sun, devastating rains, drought, and famine. And so the aggressive side of them was over-developed, and they looked about for some way of recovering their losses. There lay Kashmir, a spoilt child lolling in the lap of Nature, and they swooped down to capture her possessions. In order to gain them they knocked her down again and again, and she was not strong enough to resist. And not only was she invaded from outside, but internal weakness and dissension destroyed her individuality, and she was the prey first of one more powerful enemy, then of another.

The first authentic history we can collect is long before the Romans came to Britain. Asoka was at that time a great Indian ruler living in the same period as Hannibal. This king was a Buddhist, or follower of Buddha, by religion. He was also an enthusiastic missionary, and wherever possible he erected temples to Buddha, and he visited Kashmir with this purpose. Then, just when the Romans were conquering Britain, came another Buddhist ruler, also a king in upper India.

We hear of a cruel king about A.D. 500, whose one idea was slaughter, and at last, about A.D. 700, we find a good king arising from Kashmir itself. His name was Lalataditya. He did much to restore agricultural prosperity by his goodness to the farming classes, by making canals and bridges which enabled them to bring their grain and other produce to the capital and larger centres, and by his general beneficence.

He was a man of many tastes: sporting, artistic, and literary. He was an adventurous spirit too, and, having tried to better his country within, set off to better it without, by conquest. India, Asia, and Tibet all felt his victorious hand. But his desire was not only for bloodshed. He still thought of his country, and brought back all that he could gather from the countries he had invaded which might be of service to Kashmir. Skilled workmen and men of letters were to help to improve the manual works and the minds of the people. He brought gold from India, and ornamented temples with it, and built several fine ones.

After his death the succession of his worthless son brought another sad epoch, which only made the past reign stand out more vividly as a great one, even with its shortcomings.

King Lalataditya was quite a remarkable man. He was a contemporary of Charlemagne the Great, and under his rule Kashmir was raised to its highest point of prosperity. Finding it in a position of serfdom to foreign powers, he left it an independent kingdom. The tables were turned, and Kashmir went forth to conquer. Historians of the day boasted that their king crossed the ocean by stepping from one island to another. He never saw the sea; but to ignorant people even their goslings are swans. He built the wonderful temple of Martand, according to Dr. Stein, though some archæologists think it was built still earlier.

He is said to have given good precepts for his people to follow. The forts were kept well provisioned, for he had acquired knowledge during his

fighting expeditions, and knew the importance of feeding his soldiers and of keeping spare food in store in case of sudden need.

During the reign of Lalataditya the army of Kashmir was kept in fighting trim, and consisted of about six thousand cavalry (though we should probably have called it mounted infantry, and mere ponies even at the best could have been their chargers) and fifty thousand infantry, and it would seem to be none too large for the foreign invasions he successfully carried through. But as time went on the soldiers, denied the excitement of real fighting, became a source of trouble to their country, and civil wars became a habit.

The star of Kashmir began to set, and her fortunes declined steadily for two hundred years, when once again a good king of their own improved the lot of the people. Avantivarma was not a conqueror, but he was an architect and an engineer, and he was succeeded by a man who was neither practical nor a great soldier, and yet was bent on conquest. All that he accomplished was an invasion of the neighbouring valley of Kangra and the north of the Panjab.

After his death came a sad time for the country. Two or three little boy kings were murdered, as well as their regent mothers. Famine and flood afflicted the land, and a succession of low and cruel rulers, who, between personal jealousies and public tyrannies, dragged Kashmir down to the depths.

This was the Hindu period, and dozens of petty kings, each ruling over small holdings, and always quarrelling amongst themselves, dragged out generation by generation. A change of religion was

forced on the people by a change of rulers. The Mahomedans now thought they would rule Kashmir.

The new king was called the Iconoclast or image-breaker, for he turned his vengeance on the great Buddhist and Hindu temples, and did his best to wreck them. He took some of the solid materials over which such keen labour had been spent, to build a mosque of his own faith in the city, and for use there generally. His reign was one of misery for the people. He sunk the books of Hindu learning in the Dal lake, and offered the people death or conversion to his religion. Some gave in, many fled to India, many more were murdered.

One good king came to the throne in 1417. He is said to have built a palace twelve stories high with vast rooms. His chief virtue was religious tolerance, and many Brahmans returned to their country. He even tried to repair some of their temples, and helped the Hindus by lessening taxation and giving them land. He brought in the Persian language in place of the Sanskrit, and encouraged music and poetry, also artistic manufactures from other countries. His long reign of fifty-two years was also crowned with foreign conquest, and again Tibet and part of the Panjab were included in the kingdom of Kashmir.

The succeeding kings were of a cruel stamp, and things were worse than ever, for an enemy from their own borders, a tribe called the Chaks, now swept down upon them.

The year 1586 brought the Moguls under Akbar their emperor, who routed the Mahomedan king. On his third visit he built the fort Hari Parbat, hoping to tempt back people who had fled from

the country to work on it, as he gave liberal wages.

He is said to have employed thirty thousand porters or coolies. He had his empire to run in Delhi as well, however, and so his visits to Kashmir did not leave much permanent result; though even his occasional visits were a good thing, providing expenditure and labour in the preparations at the palace; for Mogul emperors moved with a court, and all was no doubt in readiness for their visits.

But, of course, absentee kings cannot leave any great mark on a distant country visited only at intervals, and during which visits most of their time is taken up with pleasure.

Still, the Kashmiris have reason to be grateful for all the beauty called into being by Jehangir during his occupation. Seven hundred and seventy gardens are attributed to the Moguls.

There is one Mogul emperor to whom the country owes nothing but hatred. This was Aurenzebe, another religious fanatic who persecuted unmercifully, and again made the lives of the Hindus unbearable. And yet, as a whole, the Mogul period brought much relief to Kashmir. Wealth poured in with the Delhi Court, and many good things in the form of revenue settlement and public works were started.

The Pathan invaders brought Kashmir again to a state of misery. One of the Amirs was even petty enough in his spite to try to wreck the beauty of the gardens. Another one tied up poor Hindus in sacks and drowned them in the lakes. And again Kashmir turned in despair for help to an

outside power, and Ranjit Singh, ruler of the Sikhs, now took possession.

But it was almost a case of out of the frying-pan into the fire, for the Sikhs oppressed the wretched people, levying taxes on every trade and manufacture, exacting all they could in every possible way. Descriptions left by travellers, about 1840, show the miserable and abject condition to which they had sunk. Better days, however, were about to dawn, and surely it was time they did. For over 2000 years, as far as history relates, the peaceful and prosperous times of Kashmir, as we have seen, could be counted on one hand.

But before we pass on to its modern history we must have a look at the old temples of Kashmir, for they are, after all, part of the ancient history.

## CHAPTER III

### Ancient Temples of Kashmir

Every country of importance has had a religious past, and even if the present finds ruined temples, the fact remains that those lofty arches and massive blocks of masonry were quarried and erected, bit by bit, by a people who expended their best on a building which was to be set aside for worship.

The ruined temples of Kashmir are solid, and simple of design, and yet they have fluted pillars and trefoiled arches which trace their origin to an artistic source. The keynote of some of these old temples is decidedly Grecian in character, which would be accounted for, as we have seen, by their erection by so gifted and widely informed a person as Akbar.

The best situated of the present ruins, though not the best preserved nor the finest, is the temple dome crowning the summit of the hill above Srinagar. The Takt-i-Suleiman, as it is named, is an object for an early morning ride, well worth the trouble of such a climb as it entails. Paving-stones mark the winding way, which zigzags up the face of the hill, and presently you emerge on a platform 1000 feet above the plains, while Kashmir and its surrounding

mountain ranges lie spread out beneath you in a wide bird's-eye view.

There was an older temple still on the same site, which was built by the son of the great Asoka, of which very little is left; but the present one is hoary enough to command our respect and to form a link with the past, as the date of this one even is said to be about A.D. 250.

Another temple ruin is in the Lidar valley at Bhaumjo, about the same date; there is also a great column standing on the road to Islamabad, 24 miles from Srinagar, and several others in various parts. But the best remains of all are to be found at Martand in the Lidar valley. This temple was built on a superb site: a gentle slope of grassland, with snowy mountains as a background, and close at hand are stretches of fertile valley, fine trees, and streams of cool water under their shade. This is the only temple which possessed what we name, in our cathedrals, chancel, choir, nave, and transepts. Although it is in ruins, we can still see what a grand pile it must once have been. The height is reported to have been 75 feet.

There was a wide flight of stone steps up to a splendid trefoil arch. On each side was a small chapel with lofty arches, said to have been built by the queen of King Ramaditya, who lived, we believe, in the beginning of the sixth century. This was over four hundred years before the battle of Hastings, and the temple was mentioned in the records of the King of Kashmir, Lalataditya, who reigned from 693 to 729. There was also a wide quadrangle, 220 feet by 142, supported by carved pillars, and eighty-

four columns carried the roof, which no longer exists.

If the outside influence which was great enough to raise such temples as these in a strange country hundreds of miles from the seat of rule, had only been as practical and benevolent as it was powerful, the story of Kashmir would have been very different. The origin of these temples was not based on any specially religious turn of mind of the people themselves, and the rulers succeeding Asoka were not filled with his religious zeal, though Lalataditya revived it. After his death the succession of his worthless son brought another sad period, which only served to make his reign stand out as a vivid contrast.

In 1586 the best thing possible happened for Kashmir in its conquest by the great Akbar, who lived at the same time as our Queen Elizabeth, and for two hundred years Kashmir remained part of the Mogul dominions.

The fort outside Srinagar, Hari Parbat, which is still used as quarters for troops and stores, was built by Akbar on one of his three visits to Kashmir.

As the power of the Mogul emperors declined the old evils in Kashmir revived, and became even worse. Once more it was the scene of cruelty, oppression, and poverty. The worst time of all was when it was dominated by the Afghans. As under the imperious Duchess in *Alice in Wonderland*, the standing order of the day was "Off with their heads." The unfortunate people were even sewn up in sacks by twos and threes and sunk in the lake. They were even spiteful enough to spoil the beautiful Mogul gardens on the Dal lake.

At last, in their despair, they besought the help of the great Sikh ruler of the Panjab, Ranjit Singh. This was in 1819, and Kashmir was once more annexed by a foreign power.

As rulers of other religious beliefs came to Kashmir they generally destroyed to a certain extent the buildings they found, and as the religious fervour melted, the temples, no longer protected from any destructive influences, gradually crumbled to ruin. It has often been noticed that the decay of religion marks the decay of a country, and Kashmir, though she had been given a good chance, lost her place in the race of human prosperity.

With the decline of Buddhism the Hindu religion took its place about the eleventh century. Again it was changed about two hundred years later for Mahomedanism, and back again to Hinduism, and so on. The country-people are now chiefly of the religion of Mahomed, but the Maharajah and townsfolk are Hindus by faith. They all seem to pull along, however, possibly because their religion is more inspired by the letter than by the spirit.

The religion of Kashmir in these days is just about as mixed as possible, partly Mahomedan, partly Hindu, with the worship of saints and the fear of demons still prevalent. This is not surprising, considering the many changes of faith forced upon the people by changes of rule.

The most ancient of all worship, even before Buddhism was brought in, was Nàg or snake worship. The people imagined that huge snakes lived in every mountain, and especially near the springs at their

foot. They used to build tanks at these spots, which the snake god was to occupy at his pleasure. Their veneration for snakes was no doubt dictated more by fear than reverence; but fear lessened by degrees, and a regular worship grew out of the ideas produced by old legends.

The syllable Nàg, which is part of the names of many places in Kashmir, has been given from the place being dedicated to one of these snake gods. We find Vernàg, "the place of many springs and the snake," Nàgmarg, the alp of the snake, and so on. We know that in our own old Bible history the people of Isr el were healed by worshipping the form of a serpent, even though it was the faith which really pulled them through. Then there is the serpent of the garden of Eden, a demon much feared. The origin of the Chinese dragon may possibly be traced to Nàg worship, though it is also supposed to have been from the legends of terrible prehistoric monsters which have been handed down. Our own dragons, too, show that our ancient history was much like any other. The strange thing about Kashmiris is that they seem to know nothing about their fine old temple remains. If we question them, the answer will probably be that they are just "old praying-places" built in the old days; but even the Pundits, or educated people, seem to care nothing for their antiquities, as, for instance, our old country-folk care for our Druidical or Roman remains.

It is a pity to see the Kashmir ruins going from bad to worse. A special department is much needed, so that there may be some one to preserve them from further ruin. Very likely many interesting relics of

the old cities might be found buried in their ruined sites.

On one of the many tablelands or flat parts of the valley where the lower hills slope up to the mountains, there are some curious old stones firmly imbedded in the ground, from which they project about four feet. They are shaped something like blunt arrow-heads, and the people will tell you that they are arrows which were shot from the bows of the gods in defence of the men of the valley at a time when they were preyed upon by huge giants, who devoured them by way of refreshment after their huge wrestling bouts. The undulations of the grassy ground are said to be the result of the pommelling of great knees and elbows.

Saint worship is very popular in Kashmir, especially among the boatmen, and the chant we heard as one of those dredging barges passed us on the Dal lake was an invocation to some special saint.

Every village has its shrine or miniature temple. But that their religion consists in keeping the outside of the platter clean is proved by the fact that most villagers in any position of trust will keep three accounts: one for the eye of his superior, one for his subordinates, while the correct one, showing real returns, is the one which lives in his own pocket and is consulted by himself alone.

The contrast between temples ancient and modern is amazing, and yet it is in accordance with the history of the people. They did not of themselves build the solid shrines of worship which continue even now to attract veneration, and we have only to visit Srinagar to see how true this is.

The principal mosque is built of wood, and has beautifully carved cedar-wood pillars. Among the temple roofs we can see, both Hindu and Mahomedan, is one called the Golden Temple. Its burnished roof of gold lacquer is still preserved, but other domes glint silver in the bright sunshine. Alas, some of them are only plated with old kerosene tins!

There is another temple, the daintiest and prettiest thing imaginable. In the spring, on the edge of the river, it makes a vivid bit of colouring, though built of humble whitewashed plaster. Its roof is a garden of purple iris and pink and white tulips. Brass bells and an elegant spire complete the feminine appearance of this little mosque of the twentieth century.

In future times no one will visit the ruins of that fairylike mosque, for it is built of mud, and to mud it will return. No one surely will care to visit, in days to come, any but a small minority of the religious edifices of this or last century, whether East or West. We count the cost too carefully for one thing, and Time will not wait as he did, or seemed to do, in old days.

Missionary zeal is no less—we will hope the right kind is even greater than in past years—and no doubt there is a great deal of true Christian faith and endeavour among people who cannot as yet profess it openly. But most important of all is a spread of practical Christianity which shall alter the lives of people who have been accustomed to look on their religion as separate from their daily tasks and pleasures. We want to teach truth for the sake of goodness, not for any advantage it may

produce. We want to teach true strength in place of tyranny and abuse of power. We also want to teach that cleanliness is next to godliness, and love for one's neighbour of more importance than prayers on the high road. The practical example of British men and women is the leaven which is gradually if slowly spreading, and this is as important, even more so, than teaching only the letter of our religion.

## CHAPTER IV

### Modern Kashmir and its People

The modern history of Kashmir dates from the extension of the British power to the Panjab, where the Sikh army had to be subdued.

Gulab Singh was a hill ruler of the Dogra country. He was born at Jammu, and was one of three warlike brothers who, between them, had conquered Ladakh and Baltisan and other districts. Gulab Singh, being a wise man, took the side of the British, and his reward was one altogether out of proportion to his services. He was presented with the kingdom of Kashmir on the payment of a nominal sum—an absurd sum for such a priceless possession.

The chief motive of the Government was to show their displeasure to the Sikhs, and they can never have realised what they were doing. However, Gulab Singh became the new ruler of Kashmir, and was succeeded by his heirs. He left the country in very nearly as bad a state as he found it, but his son was a humane man, and if only his officials had been as good as himself things would have gone better still. But they were grasping and tyrannical, and ground the people down to the last gasp.

# Modern Kashmir and its People

The year 1877 was a cruel time. A bad season was added to excessive taxation, so that the people preferred leaving their crops to rot in the ground to gathering what would bring in so little profit to themselves. Villages were deserted, trade went down, and starvation decreased the population. It was only with the last Maharajah that a turning loomed in the long lane of Kashmir's misfortunes.

It is now a feudatory state of British India. Modern education and methods of commerce are being introduced, and the conditions are improving very rapidly, chiefly, it must be said, in consequence of the direct influence of the British.

The numbers of travellers who pour into the country every year during the summer months are doing a great service to Kashmir. They bring in money, and they encourage her trades in exchange for pleasure and health, but they do more. The breezy, sporting nature of the Sahib, the humanising influence of the ladies and children, the devoted ministry of the medical missionaries, are all silently teaching a good proportion of the people that whining and cringing and untruth are not the characteristics of true men, that endurance and energy are. They meet with honest dealing and kindness, and show that they have learnt to trust their visitors, for there is hardly a merchant who will not send his goods on approval, knowing nothing of his customers save that they are Sahibs.

The Maharajah is most courteous too, and has allowed camping and building to a very large extent in and about his capital, Srinagar (the City of the Sun), as well as in the valley and up at Gulmarg,

which is built on either side of the river Jhelum, and has a native population of about 120,000. The population of Kashmir itself is some 3,000,000.

Srinagar reminds one of a large Swiss village with its chalet-like houses and mountainous background. It also recalls parts of Venice and of the river Thames. A strange mixture, and lacking, of course, in the civilisation of all these places.

The whole picture is fascinating and the frame is grand. There are seven wooden bridges spanning the river, which, like Venice, counts the water as its chief street. It is alive with various river craft, plying busily up and down, and even a steam-launch or two. The houses are built of wood and sun-dried bricks, and look very shaky, but seem to withstand the constant slight shocks of earthquake better than more solidly built ones.

The site of the old city was a far healthier one. The continual drainage from this town into the river, and its low marshy banks, make it very unhealthy during some months of the year. But the temptation to build a city on a river is always a great one, the advantages are so numerous, and it gains in beauty what it loses in health.

Part of the charm of Srinagar lies in its variety. There are Hindu temples, Mahomedan mosques, tall-storied, balconied houses and shops, with carved lattice windows and doors. Bright touches of colour in the spring are given by the vines and tulips, which grow everywhere, and also by the groups of women at their washing down by the river, for some of them wear lovely colours.

The view of Srinagar and the country all round

which we get from the temple-crowned hill, Takt-i-Suleiman, is unique. The city itself, with its brown wooden roofs, looks like a large ant-hill; the flat meadow-land and rice-fields, spread out like the squares of a chess-board, are intersected by streams and river winding about like silver ribbons, and the poplar avenues stretch in long green lines. Farther off the lakes gleam bright, and reflect the mountains in sapphire and crystal.

And what of the people of this delightful country? I am afraid we have seen that the natural untrained Kashmiri was not a strong character. Endurance and patience—the chief virtues one might imagine all their hardships to have produced in them—are even lacking. One of the everyday sights is a great big man sobbing like a noisy child, and a whining and cringing manner is far too common. Even when they bear pain or trouble it is not bravely borne. They are very lazy, too, and very dirty. What was good enough for their fathers, they say, is good enough for them.

On the other hand, they are not aggressive, and are happy in their family life. They can hardly be called truthful, although they have fluent tongues, and can make the best of a bad case. Still, they are improving, and a great factor in this direction is the excellent school for boys under Mr. Tyndall Biscoe, who teaches them to be manly as well as giving them book learning, and their water feats show that some of the rising generation will be ashamed of crying.

But the people of Kashmir are not all of the same stock. As we know, the ruler we brought

in was a Hindu, while the country-people were Mahomedan. So we get some distinct types, all of whom are now under the Maharajah's rule.

The Sikhs and Dogras are the governing classes, who live chiefly in and about the winter capital of Jammu. The Pundits, or original Hindus, very light in colour, with Aryan features—that is, similar to the people of Europe—are townsfolk and clerks. It is their women-folk who wear the lovely purple, green, and red garments, and so we can always pick them out in a group of women, for the Mahomedans wear a long, loose brown woollen frock, cut like a long skirt, with wide sleeves rolled back. The peasants and farmers are all Mahomedans, though some of them elect to be merchants. And all these different people are under one rule, though allowed to follow their two separate religions with the same tolerance as our various sects and churches.

Of course, in sketching the character of the average Kashmiri villager, we do not underrate those who have, by modern education, raised themselves in many ways. Their nobles and gentry have a dignified bearing and an appearance of culture which show them to be superior, and some of the Mullahs or priests are men of learning. The people are fine physically, and the men can carry, if they like, very heavy loads.

The boatmen, again, are quite a separate class or tribe, numbering about 34,000. They are called *Hangis*, and proudly declare they are the descendants of Noah. Certainly their boats of gabled roof and flat bottom are not unlike the famous Noah's ark of our young days. The boatmen, too, have

their class distinctions. For instance, the floating-garden cultivators, and those who reap and transport in their barges the harvest of the lake—the water-nut—are superior to the other bargee folk. The passenger boatmen are lower still, and, lowest of all, the fishermen.

Kashmir has its gipsies too, and this wonderful tribe has many points of likeness, whether wandering in the East or the West. They go in for leather work, as it is their business to skin dead cattle and tan the hides. There are also shepherd tribes, but they are nomadic, and are not Kashmiris. Their one idea in life is the well-being of their flocks and herds; wherever pasture is good, thither lies their path. They sell their milk, butter, and wool to the middlemen who retail it.

One characteristic draws us very closely into sympathy with the country-people. They tend the graves of their departed relatives and friends with respect, and plant iris and narcissus all over them. The sweeps of colour one sees in the spring are more often than not the cemeteries, though they are very seldom enclosed by walls.

The children are dear but dirty little people. Still, they seem to have a good time, and enjoy a free life, with every chance to paddle as much as they like, and that means a great deal to children. They are fond of games, and play hop-scotch and tip-cat. In Srinagar they are even learning cricket. Little girls love their rag dolls, and have little toy palanquins for them, and they will act the principal events of their simple life in "make believe," just as English children do.

The people, as a whole, appreciate play-acting, and there are troupes of travelling players who go from village to village. Their power of mimicry and " get up " is excellent.

Kashmiris are great gossips, and love handing on tit-bits of news, which, of course, lose nothing in the telling. The wilder the rumour the more to their taste. They have their wandering minstrels too, but unfortunately, for the sake of history or romance, they usually sing an ode to the praise of the most important person present—again one of the results of their old days under tyranny, when to please and flatter those in power was their first thought. The Kashmiri has always an eye for the main chance.

There are elaborate customs connected with the chief events of their lives—birth, marriage, and death—and very expensive their customs are.

We know that charity begins at home, and here let us say a good word for the Kashmiri. He appears to best advantage in his home life. The women are great homekeepers, and are devoted to their husbands and large families. The wife is by no means a drudge or chattel, but the equal of her husband. Indeed, he often stands in awe of her, and if he is prone to weep, she can bandy words with another lady in a manner sufficiently interesting to hold the close attention and interest of the respective husbands. When these wordy battles are waged between the boatwomen, who apparently have the largest powers of abusive language, they will stand on the prows of their boats and quarrel till sunset; and if the matter is still undecided, a basket

overturned on the boat floor signifies that the fight will be resumed on the next opportunity. Aunts, on both sides of the family, are very important people in Kashmiri, as aunts are often apt to be the world over.

The staple food of the Kashmiri is rice; and the flat fields surrounding the lakes for miles are excellent for its cultivation, for rice has to be irrigated while it is growing, and the natives wade about in these little terraces of muddy water dibbling in the young rice plants from the seedling bed, where it stands in thick emerald green.

Other food stuffs are barley, wheat, water-nuts, and walnuts ground into flour; milk, fruit, and eggs are also abundant, as well as vegetables. Probably no better natural food stores exist than in Kashmir. The climate is what we describe as temperate, never too hot except in the lowest part of the valley, and never too cold in inhabited parts. The Gujars or grazers move out to huts in the hills during the hot weather, for the sake of good pasture for their beasts, and wind their way down to the plains for the same purpose in the winter months.

Srinagar enjoys what we should call a good English winter. Frost or snow, sleet and rain, play the changes, but the blessings of these when exercised in moderation can only be appreciated by people who have experienced a climate which is only cool for two months in the year. But severe winters can make the life of the people very hard. Their houses are not built to resist either excess in heat or cold. There is no glass to the windows. In the summer, their pretty open lattice lets in flies, and in the winter,

though they seal them over with paper, that is not enough to keep out the bitter frost. Every Kashmiri, man, woman, and child, possesses, however, a little wicker-covered earthenware pot, shaped like a round basket. Into this they put hot embers or charcoal, and then crouch over it. At night they may even sleep with these *Kangris* in their bosoms, and severe burns and sores are constant results.

Some of the old sages of Kashmiri declare that the winters are now not so severe as in their young days. We hear such remarks on many subjects from venerable friends in our own country, and they would seem to be right. We seldom nowadays hear of the Thames being frozen over, of four-in-hands being driven across it, or of the vicar at the head of his people marching over from one bank to the other. Perhaps the climate in Kashmir is becoming milder, but the winters are still quite severe enough for windows without glass.

The people of Srinagar have other foes to fight besides cold winters, and the greater because they will not try to conquer them. They will try to keep themselves warm, but they will not attempt to keep themselves clean. The dirt and insanitary condition of the city is so bad that when any sickness comes it finds open arms of welcome.

Cholera is the great terror of the Kashmiris, and yet they will do nothing to avoid or prevent its spread. They drink the dirty river water into which the drains of the city fall, and where they wash their dirty clothes. They eat overripe fruit rotting in the sun and fly-blown. Worst of all, they resent any attempt to improve their ways.

Now and then a fire, caused most likely by an overturned *kangri*, will sweep through streets of the city, and one would imagine that good might in these cases come out of evil. But the houses are built up again in the same way, narrow and poky, and dirt once more reigns supreme.

Other foes, which not only Kashmir but other countries have to endure, are visitations by earthquake, flood, and famine. These convulsions of our earth, which still distress mankind, are felt all along the Himalayas, which are called "young," geologically speaking. Kashmir has often suffered from these terrifying shocks, and the ruined condition of the temples is no doubt partly due to damage by earthquake. Famine and flood are more possible to fight, as provision should be made in case of bad seasons, and flood should be more intelligently guarded against, though it cannot be entirely prevented.

There is one very bad system in the administration of Kashmir. The people of the city are held to be of first importance. The peasants must provide for them, and may then profit by the remainder of their crops. Grain is bought by the State at a price which partly pays the farmer, and is sold again at cheaper rates to the townsfolk, who now look on themselves as favoured mortals and expect this and other favours as their right, not the least ashamed of their pauperism. They are certainly not as comfortably housed as the agricultural people, who, in their cottages surrounded by orchard and garden, and with ample space instead of being crowded together, have at first sight much the best of it.

But in hard years the peasants suffer by comparison with the city folk. Perhaps the general progressive trend of government will recognise this evil, and insist on good living wages and encourage thrift and self-respect.

The language of Kashmir is quite distinct from that of India. It is chiefly composed of words from the Sanskrit, a good many Persian, a few Arabic and Panjabi, and also a few Urdu, the camp language of India. Ordinary travellers like ourselves, who only know the latter very indifferently, will do well to take an interpreter with them into the valleys where they intend to march and camp. The pony-men as a rule act as interpreters, but they are also usually great rascals. The country-folk speak Kashmiri only, though, of course, merchants and the head-men of villages are able to understand Urdu. The educated classes know Persian as well as these other languages, and English is now being taught in the city schools.



PICTURESQUE HOUSES ON THE MAR CANAL
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## CHAPTER V

### The City of the Sun and its Industries

Srinagar, the City of the Sun, looks very gay on special occasions, such as the state entry or departure of the Maharajah. In gaily lacquered barges, some with canopies, sit all the grandees. Some are closed, in which are the ladies and their families and attendants. The procession is towed along the river banks by running coolies with stout towing ropes. Kashmir shawls, red, green, and turquoise-blue, are hung out of windows much as we hang out flags and bunting when our royalty pass by.

The palace of the Maharajah is a disappointing building, with its mixture of gaudy Eastern colouring, cheap plaster, and European commonplace design. The City of the Sun is worthy of a finer residence for its ruler.

There is a museum full of interesting specimens and relics. In glass cases are the lovely old shawls, which, in times gone by, made the name of Kashmir famous. The colours are splendid, and the texture of a silky wool finer than one ever meets in these days of cheap Johns. The wearing of these shawls was first introduced by a king of Kashmir in 1400, and the favourite pattern is said

to have been designed from the peculiar curve taken by the river Jhelum as seen from the Takt-i-Suleiman. Shawl weaving used to be one of the chief industries of Kashmir, but it now holds a less important place.

Embroidery is now a much more popular branch of trade. There are two classes of that also—the very fine work on silk and fine wool or linen material, at a higher price of course, and the coarse chain stitch in what we used to call "crewel work" on coarse wool and cotton, also on felt rugs imported from Ladakh.

The merchants cater chiefly for a European market, and for the hundreds of visitors who pour into Kashmir year by year; but they also supply the travelling pedlars or "box-wallahs" who find their way all over India. Then they have agents in London and other towns for the cheapest kind of work. The surroundings of Srinagar, with its rickety shops or one's own veranda, where the things are spread out by a "box-wallah," provide a much better setting to these wares than when they are piled up in a London emporium.

Another product of Srinagar is the woollen stuff called "Puttoo," very like our own Scotch and Irish homespun. It is worn in a coarse form by the people; but much better makes have been introduced, and are splendid for country clothes both for English men and women. Those who admire good work and will give the proper price can still be suited.

Look at the expression of relief and delight on old Mahomed Jehan's face when you ask for *good*

work! With a contemptuous gesture he kicks to one corner the bundle of cheap stuff he was spreading out politely for your inspection. Then from a red-painted upper shelf he produces a precious parcel swathed in white linen. Here are the old Persian patterns: iridescent peacocks, and various conventional patterns in embroidery, which look like dainty enamel, so exquisitely fine is the work; a shawl or two of gossamer fineness, curtains and coverings of lovely design and colour.

Then perhaps he will show us one or two small prayer-rugs like velvet, with thirty stitches to the inch, worth fifty pounds apiece. Things fit for kings and queens are spread out before our longing eyes. That we can purchase none of them except some small treasure (which he reduces in price because we have admired his good things) matters not to Mahomed Jehan, for his artistic soul has been comforted by our admiration, and he salaams us down his rickety ladder to the steps where our boat waits, offering to send anything we choose to order to any address in the world.

"The money? Oh, the money! any time will do." We wish it would!

It is sad that the modern craze for many things, and those cheap, should debase the art of Kashmir. It is the same with the lovely old papier mâché. Nowadays it is usually copied in cheap wood, in bad designs and crude colours. The old fast embroidery cottons and wools give place to cheap dyes which run at a drop of water. Unseasoned deal takes the place of fragrant old cedar wood. The silver work is often poor and brittle, so is much of the

copper, and the wood-carving is rough. But efforts are being made by Mr. Hadow and others to restore the standard, and one can get good design and workmanship if one can pay for it and is willing to wait. Some of the best carving is very fine.

The stone merchants or lapidaries are very clever at cutting seals, also at setting stones, and they make pretty ornaments. Certain stones are found in the hills, and there is said to be a vein of emerald in the top of Mount Haramouk. But the best stones, such as agate, cat's-eye, bloodstone, jade, crystal, and rough turquoise are imported from Ladakh and Yarkand, where the Tibetan women wear marvellous ornaments of chased brass and rough turquoise, coral, and amber.

In Srinagar the turquoise is worked into a smooth mosaic, of which many pretty fancy articles are made, mounted in silver or brass. Some of the enamel work is very fine. In fact, though a great deal of trash is sold to those who want cheap mementoes of Kashmir, there is naturally, also, some really good and choice workmanship. Unfortunately, most of the English people who visit Kashmir have light purses, and have to be content with what their eye tells them is inferior. Still this need not necessarily mean such slack work as only a slack Kashmiri can produce.

The embroidery on cotton is wonderfully effective, however—even the cheap sorts.

I should like to take you to one of the two carpet factories we once visited; it was under Mr. Hadow's supervision. Wooden sheds gave shelter to the

weavers and their hand-looms. From six to ten men and boys sit in a row in front of the loom, on which is a rug in the making. A dictator sits at the end of the form, reading out the pattern at what seemed to us a rapid pace: "Three red, four blue, five white, seven blue, twelve red," and so on, in a monotonous chant, while the dictation class plies its coloured wools with deft fingers. The number of stitches to an inch in a rug of average quality is ten.

Now we are asked to go up a ladder—a very rickety one—into a wooden loft, where sits the compositor. He is a clever old man, with a long white beard and a huge turban. He salaams gravely as we trip upon the uneven boards of the floor. He knows exactly how to translate the coloured design before him into directions such as we saw down below. Another man sits on the floor taking down the orders with a reed pen on the vellum-like Kashmir-made paper.

When we compliment the old man on his skill a quiet, restrained smile crosses his face, and again he salaams; and as we climb down the ladder we hear his dignified chant: "Panch qal, tin safed, das nila. Five red, three white, ten blue," and so on.

We have just time to drive to the silk factory. This industry is now a source of much revenue to the Maharajah. Silkworms are boarded out in all the neighbouring villages to feed and grow fat on the mulberry leaves. Then they are brought into the factory, which consists of large buildings. Powerful engines drive the machinery, and hundreds of

"hands" are employed. We go round watching the different processes by which the cobweb-like thread of silk is carded off and spun till we track it to the packing-house, where it lies in great heaps of fancy gold. The flossy skeins are finally sewn up in great bales and are dispatched for manufacture to England. An expert manager was lately installed, and his provincial accent sounds strange in this far-off land.

Srinagar affords residence to a small colony of British folk. There is, of course, the Residency, the charming house and grounds placed at the disposal of the Government representative. There are two English churches, a club, a library, a race-course, cricket and polo grounds, golf links, and an hotel. But best of all there are excellent hospitals: two under State control, and one the result of private self-devotion. For about thirty years this mission of pity has come to the rescue of thousands of natives, and the English Medical Mission has at its head the brothers Drs. Neve, who have the latest surgical knowledge, and try to heal the souls as well as the bodies of their patients. That about thirty thousand patients are treated every year shows that their work is appreciated. The buildings are clean and airy, and everything is up-to-date and the best of its kind. The doctors also make tours into the country occasionally, and carry aid to many who cannot come to the city hospitals.

So we find that the greatest good, as well as in times past the greatest evil which the people of Kashmir have experienced, has come to them through a foreign power; but it is usually so. How about

the mission of Gregory the Great which came to old Britain ? Do we not owe our greatness to those first seeds of truth sown by a devoted missionary ? And all Christian people can be missionaries—the soldier and civilian, the mistress of a bungalow, the children playing in its veranda ; it is not confined only to missionaries by profession.

We shall find a visit to the native shop-quarter or bazaar quite amusing, though the various odours, swarms of flies, and general dirt and squalor are trying. Still we must, as we can do nothing to better this, try to see and smell it only from a picturesque point of view. Picturesque it certainly is, this quaint wooden town. As we walk its irregular streets we find butchers and bakers and candlestick-makers, and trades of every kind. But unlike one of our own streets, where perhaps at most there will be two butchers or two bakers, we find the rule for Indian shops is that birds of a feather shall flock together, and here we have five or six blacksmiths in a row, and opposite to them half a dozen pottery shops full of every shape and size of pot, from the tiny saucer for burning oil-tapers to the important vessels for household use, such as water and flour, and huge earthenware pans for kneading the daily meal. Farther up is a delightful basket shop full of *kangris* and trays for rice and fruit and vegetables. Opposite them, most conveniently, are a row of greengrocers' full of nice green stuff—at least some of it is nice—and a little boy begins to wave away flies most energetically from the fruit he hopes we will buy as he sees us approach.

Here are drapers' with neat shelves of cotton

stuffs, and tailors working the familiar Singer's sewing machine.

Tea-shops (for Kashmiris are devoted to the fragrant cup) have little tables set out with flattish saucers, and a steaming brass pot in which tannin is cooking merrily.

There are a few of the cheaper art shops, but the good ones are all in the street on the river called the Maharajgaugh. Copper and brass shops are rather attractive, the shapes of the *lotas* or drinking vessels are so quaint.

Carpenters have not a good name in Srinagar, though they can work well enough when they like, and then can produce wonders with very few tools. Seasoned wood is certainly very expensive and scarce now, and fresh deal is chiefly used instead of sweet-smelling cedar wood as in old days. The shops are little low booths open to the street, often with storied houses and crazy balconies above them. The woodwork is blackened by smoke; sometimes there are bits of carving above the doors, and lattice-work windows and uneven beams. The average building is very slipshod, and doors and windows don't pretend to fit; perhaps it is as well they don't, as a little ventilation is thus assured; but they remind one of the shirt of the Irishman who, finding it too short, cut a bit off the top and sewed it on to the bottom. Many a door is treated thus.

As we pass some frying shops we are glad to hurry on; the smell of *ghi* (clarified butter), sometimes of an exalted character, is trying, and passes the bounds even of the picturesque. It is delightful to cross one of the bridges and find our way down to the

boat again, and, picking up a tea-basket, to paddle down the river into a shady canal and discuss the respective merits of our own tea and bread and butter with a basket of fruit, one of our few bazaar purchases.

Islamabad has to be visited, and we stay there a night, for it is a good many miles up the river—in fact, is the source of the Jhelum.

We find some rather fascinating local wares here. Scarlet woollen covers, appliquéd with their cloth of contrasting shades and coloured chain-stitch, would make nice summer rugs or cosy curtains. Thick woollen blankets and coarse cotton cloth, hand made by the peasants, are on their way for sale in the city.

There is a very sacred tank here, but the fish are not allowed to be caught, and must lead as happy a life as a fish could wish for, having water from a mountain stream and liberal feeding at the hands of the "faithful."

# CHAPTER VI

## The Mountains and Margs of Kashmir

As we have noticed, the valley of Kashmir is almost encircled by lofty mountain ranges. It has one outlet which we passed, at Baramulla, through which the waters of the Jhelum pour down. The chief ranges are those within the limits of Kashmir itself. The average height above the sea of the valley is 5000 feet. Kashmir, you will remember, was added to the dominions of Jammu in 1846.

We all know about the great mountain system running from the north-west to the south-east of upper India, the Himalayas, and how it is a mass of peaks from the Hindu Kush at the far north-east to the mountain monarchs near Darjeeling, where the highest one, Mount Everest, reigns in distant Nepal.

Kashmir boasts some grandees too. Nanga Parbat is nearly 27,000 feet high, and is a magnificent snow massif, with four peaks. It is *the* view most coveted from the various hill stations along the ridge we left behind us on our drive from Murree, also from different points in Kashmir. It is also the geographical end of the Himalayas proper. Nanga Parbat stands head and shoulders above any other neighbouring mountain.

Three members of an expedition (which included

Professor N. Collie, Mr. Hastings, and Major Bruce of the 5th Gurkhas) were destined to finish their span of life there. Dr. Mummery of Alpine fame, with two gallant Gurkha soldiers, also found their graves amidst its marble-white cliffs of ice. Surely, if their time had come, this was as noble a resting-place for earthly remains as any man-built cathedral. They paid the toll which the proud mountains now and then exact from aspiring men, but their bones are guarded in a crystal urn.

I shall never forget the best view I ever had of Nanga Parbat, for though I had seen it from various points, this picture is the one I constantly look at mentally. Having crossed the Nag Marg Pass and spent several days with a sister spirit, walking and sometimes riding on funny little Kashmir ponies, we at last left the pretty valley of the Lolab; climbing up through a dense forest of deodar trees, having been amused on the way by groups of chattering monkeys who much resented our intrusion, running along with great bounds and swinging themselves from branch to branch, we at last emerged on a platform of lately harvested wheat-fields. And there, spread out before us, without money and without price, was one of the two finest mountain views in the world—the whole Nanga Parbat massif, with its four peaks, of which there is one chief. From the plateau of Lash there is a straight view. No tiresome hills to block it out, although the intervening heights were 14,000 and 15,000 feet high. They had all seemed to prostrate themselves into worshipping folds of blue and purple velvet that they might the better show up their snowy king, Nanga Parbat.

In the immediate foreground stood ranks of stalwart pine trees, silent and solemn in their uniform of deep green just as Robin Hood's archers might have stood round their forest king. The monarch himself, in snowy robes, flecked at their hem with ermine points of black rock, stood forth in the evening sunshine, and gazed proudly over mile upon mile of purpling hill and green valley ; over gleaming lake and river ; over golden-brown fields and flower-spangled grassland ; over noble trees sheltering wooden hamlets ; and the evening breeze seemed to waft such thoughts as these as we sat and gazed at that sunlit purity : " O vale of Kashmir, I watch o'er thee. I am a king from whose heights flow cooling waters. Lift thine eyes to the hills from whence cometh thy help, but remember I am but a regent of the King of kings, obeying the behest of Him who made heaven and earth. The secret of my making and of thy making lie with Him. Let all the earth worship Him who was and is and is to be."

With reluctant steps we went on to our camp, feeling inclined to step backwards from that royal presence.

But there are many other splendid peaks in Kashmir. The twins Nun Kun of 24,000 feet, and Nubra about the same height, are seen from the end of Kashmir as a reward for climbing a steep pass.

The spurs of Mount Haramouk, a rugged mass of 16,000 feet, run right down to the shore of the Wular lake. Its snowy crest also has four peaks, and it is reflected in the long silent lines of water at its feet. There are wonderful snowcliffs 200 feet deep, and snowfields and glaciers enough to delight

most mountaineers, and many have been attracted by it.

Kolahoi is quite a different-looking mountain, with a steep needle peak, and black precipices from the point downwards. The road up to it from the Lidar valley passes through grand forests of pine after grassy glades and walnuts.

Tuttakutti is the highest point in the Pir Pangal, nearly 16,000 feet, and there is Apharwat also, which towers over Gulmarg. The Kaj-i-Nag runs more in a uniform barrier, but it glistens and sparkles with sapphire blue and crystal, and also reflects its beauty in the calm waters of river and lake, and even little ponds and pools show it up proudly in their small mirrors.

These are the best-known mountains of Kashmir. but there are innumerable others, most of them unnamed and unclimbed, of 16,000 feet and over. And even these "third-raters," as mountaineers call them, are higher than Mont Blanc, the highest peak in the Alps, so you can imagine how immense is the scale of the Himalayas.

We are not taking into consideration the outlying mountain ranges, such as the Karakoram and Mustagh, which, though, geographically speaking, lying within the kingdom of Kashmir, are not within Kashmir proper.

There are even more ranges again in Kishtewar, Poonch, and other surrounding districts, but this book—or shall I say trip?—will not allow of our even attempting to get a distant view or description of them.

Not the least of the wonder and mystery which

surround the great mountains of this earth is the fact that they themselves were once lowly parts of it, that they rose in slow and silent obscurity till at last they emerged from the depths of the vast waters which have now receded far from their lofty heights.

No mention of mountains would be complete without a description of the margs.

The meaning of the word *marg*[1] is simply an open grassy upland or alp, and the alps of Kashmir are as charming in their way as the well-known Alps of Switzerland.

One of the prettiest of those in Kashmir is Nagmarg, at the head of the Wular lake, above the village of Alsu. The climb up from this picturesque walnut-sheltered village is steep, about 3500 feet above the lake, and the view from its grassy meadowland is lovely. Pine forests frame it in, and from the highest ridge two of Nanga Parbat's peaks can be seen. Facing us is the hoary old Haramouk, and we can trace the course of the river in delicate grey serpentines through the glassy waters of the lake.

Far away on the wide horizon glisten the mountains of the Kaj-i-Nag and Kaghan, and, fainter still, the range of the Pir Pangal. With sighs of regret we leave such a view, but there are no huts on this marg, nor is there water enough to camp here. These mountain downs are favourite grazing pastures for cattle, sheep, and ponies.

Sonamarg is another of these uplands, also charming, and a favourite camping garden, for it is indeed a wilderness of flowers, from the first primula pushing its mauve balls through the snow, to the forget-me-

[1] Pronounced murg.

nots of June, and more gaudy autumn blossoms. Belted in with forests of various trees, snowy hills rising above them, a gracefully winding river, and another mountain head showing over the pass, combine to make Sonamarg a lovely specimen of alp.

But the favourite of all the margs, though it does not exceed these two in beauty, is Gulmarg, or the meadow of roses. It is over 8000 feet above sea-level, and has a splendid climate during the summer months. The chief alp, which gives its name to the whole stretch of grassy upland, is two miles long and half a mile broad.

Here are the race-course, polo ground, golf links, and tennis courts. Here are the church, post and telegraph offices, ballroom and club, library and native shops , while endless wooden huts are dotted about the turfy slopes. They are built chiefly by English people.

The season lasts from June to September, though some people go up as early as the end of April and stay over the first of November; but there is an early and heavy snowfall, and the huts are half buried in snow during the winter months when the place is deserted. Undulating downs, with fir trees in clumps, bubbling streams, and, lower down towards the plains, a ridge of pines, make a charming selection of sites for the little chalets, while a protecting screen of dense forest covers the hills which slope up to the mountains behind.

Kilanmarg is another of these upland meadows. And the great Tosh Maidan spreads its extensive downs for miles.

Gulmarg is the holiday centre now for Northern

India, and the goal of many a globe-trotter as well as those whose professional lives are fixed in India. With just as great joy as the Mogul emperors and their entourage sought Kashmir do Englishmen on leave, and ladies with children, order their tongas and set their faces to Gulmarg. Too much Eastern sun is not appreciated even by Easterns themselves, far less by people who exclaim when the thermometer reaches 80°.

Gulmarg is the summer residence of the Maharajah and his nobles, of the British resident, and of Kashmir bigwigs. It is a fine sanatorium, and social sports such as are dear to English men and women can be enjoyed.

The mountain of Apharwat, 14,500 feet, is one of the favourite expeditions, and there are little lakes and side valleys well worthy of picnic days.

The view of Nanga Parbat is splendid. On the one hand, we see distant Srinagar and its lakes and river gleaming and scintillating in the sunshine; on the other, nut-brown villages nestling among fine plane and walnut trees, surrounded by green rice-fields which slope down to the river. The river Jhelum from this distance appears as a bright silver ribbon, and in hazy beauty one sees the ranges of the Pir Pangal and Kaj-i-Nag, with Nanga Parbat's majestic beauty the most conspicuous feature. I think you will agree Gulmarg is worth visiting.

## CHAPTER VII

### The Passes of Kashmir

You know how in railway travelling, if one has to get from one rather remote place to another, the best thing to do is to go to a junction and change there. It is quicker than going across country. And so it is with travel in a mountainous country. One makes for a pass instead of a railway junction, as it is the lowest or easiest point at which to cross the mountains. The lowest pass in the Himalayas is the Zoji La in Kashmir, and it leads into Central Asia from the charming Sonamarg we have just been visiting in imagination.

To go from one side of the pass to the other is an object lesson in watersheds. Supposing we cross the pass in early August. We leave a series of wet camps in the Sind valley, for though we may have one bright day at Sonamarg the monsoon rainfall has set in, and the next day is wet again. So we start from Baltal, a green camp of soaked grass and dripping trees in a thick Scotch mist, and with heavy loads (for wet tents are nearly double the weight of dry), we slowly wind our way into the defile and up a steep zigzag path. Though we have ponies, we soon prefer to dismount of our own accord before

the saddles slip back, for it is very steep. But we can scramble along bravely, if breathlessly, and the ponies give us a helping tail to hang on by.

The masses of lovely wild flowers all the way up keep us in exclamations of delight. Fancy cup-and-saucer canterbury bells like little white coffee-cups, and blue aconites and larkspurs, with various coloured michaelmas daisies! If we ask our pony-men or coolies what are the names of these (to us) garden treasures, they look astonished and reply, "Oh, *flowers*, these are called flowers." "Yes, but what are their names?" "Oh, flowers, just flowers," they repeat, very unlike our own country-folk at home, who have a common name for each wild flower. But the country-folk know the wild herbs, and find some medicinal virtue in nearly all of them.

At last we finish our climb, and pause to wonder where the ancient battle between the hillmen and invaders from the north took place, and we recall similar battles such as those in our own famous Killiecrankie and Glencoe Passes. But having got very hot, and feeling very wet from heat and rain, we must not stop, for it is too damp to sit about, you say. Damp? Why, it is as dry as a bone. All the moisture remains on the Kashmir side of the watershed, and we are on short dry turf with bare bold rocks all about us, and the Dras river cutting its way between rocks burnt black as coal slag by the fierce sun in that dry air. Here and there patches of snow demonstrate to us that a month or two back we should have had great difficulty in making our way over the pass.

Not so many marches on is another pass, the Umba

La, still in Kashmir territory, and leading us over into the district of Suru.

Starting from another narrow defile, in which a winding stream finds its way down through reddish rocks, we find ourselves on steep grassy slopes. Again we hang on to the ponies' tails as they gallantly drag us up. But now and then we pause to pick the alpine flowers, which in the fresh breeze billow on the hillside like multi-coloured waves; such edelweiss, and such endless treasures, that one groans at leaving them behind! At last we must turn our backs on them, for we are nearing the summit of the pass, where fresh delights are awaiting us.

Here we are at about 15,000 feet, on a level with the top of Mont Blanc, and with a perfect view spread out on every side; peak after peak, range behind range, fading into blue and silver haze. Here and there glaciers make splashes of white, and great valleys shade into deep blue. Some of the near hills are reddish brown, some are bare and bleak; but the whole panorama is so grand and the air so brilliant, that we forget our fatigue as we rest on the baking rocks.

The descent, some 4000 feet, needs all our fortitude. Blistered toes, aching backs, cramped legs, with continual slips in soft dusty shale, make one long for a Swiss railway; so you see the epithet, "the *easiest* place to cross a mountain range," applied to passes, is only by way of comparison.

To get back into the Kashmir valley we have to cross two more passes, the Bôt Khol and the Margan. The former is very high up, and consists chiefly of glaciers and seracs, or deep fissures in the ice. On

a fine morning it is glorious work, but though we start in sunshine rain comes up on the other side (for we are going over again to the wet side of the watershed), and we have to camp on the pass in driving rain and sleet, and it is bitterly cold. But to-morrow is sure to be fine, and then we shall have another splendid view right down the glacier which takes us into the Wardwan valley, and so back over the Margan Pass into Kashmir itself again.

One very famous pass we must not omit to visit while we are in Kashmir, and that is the Tragbal, which is above the head of the Wular lake. Starting from Bandipura, it is the direct military road to Gilgit and Astor, two important outposts of our frontier; now a respectable road, in old days a mere track. Tragbal itself is a grass clearing in the forest on the mountain side, surrounded with pine forests, from which you get lovely peeps of the Wular lake and a perfect view of Mount Haramouk. The central point of the pass is five miles farther on, 12,000 feet high.

This snowy shelf is the sad spot where we would bid farewell to fair Kashmir if our way took us towards Central Asia.[1]

In speaking of the hazardous bridges of Kashmir, we should mention another kind common in the mountains, a snow bridge. These are built by Nature, not man, and are formed by avalanches of snow which fall in the winter and early spring. The great mass falls down the mountain side till it is brought up by a narrow valley and a frozen torrent. It blocks up

[1] There are innumerable passes crowning the ranges round Kashmir, but these are a few specimens.

the narrow road and freezes as hard as stone. By degrees this great mass is melted by June sunshine, and it breaks up and falls into the river, here and there leaving regular bridges of frozen snow. These are hard, and safe to cross in early summer, and we may stand on one and watch the melting waters churning and raging their frothy, impatient way down the rocky channel, and thundering under another bridge of grey and yellow marble, for as the snow melts it looks dirty yellow with black streaks. Sometimes with a roar the bridge falls in, and the triumphant waters dash great blocks of frozen snow along in their haste to join the main river and melt into its calm peace.

Over some of the mountain torrents beyond the beaten track we have to cross much worse bridges than even these. A snow bridge is either passable when it is easy enough, or it is unsafe and impassable. But the country-folk make rough wooden bridges, which are generally safe, but terribly unpleasant to us, though the native coolies or porters will trot over them quite happily with a load on their backs. The worst kind are fashioned from rough trees, which are just thrown across, and, if the torrent is wide, two trees are employed. The roots are buried in earth and heavy stones on either side of the stream; and the trunks, from which the branches and bark have been stripped, are lashed together with a twisted branch rope. It is the old cantilever principle, but in the rough is inclined to sag even more than a well-bred dachshund. We once crossed such a bridge as this, but you may be sure we came back a different way.

# CHAPTER VIII

## Rivers and River Life

A description of the mountains of Kashmir naturally leads us on to talk about the rivers, and the valleys through which these rivers flow, and to the plentiful supply of water to which Kashmir owes its fertility. No country can rise to a position of any importance if it is dry and barren.

Being cut off from the sea is a misfortune for every country, and Kashmir has suffered many of her ills from this cause. She was debarred from any healthy competition in trade, and also from friendly intercourse with other countries; but all this is changing, as we have seen.

At one time, long before the advent of man upon this earth, we are told by geologists that most probably an arm of the sea extended up towards the district of Poonah, and into this bay the Jhelum would have emptied itself.

The river Jhelum is the main artery of the great water system of Kashmir; it is 170 miles long, and its source is traced to the Wardwan. But as a respectable river its starting-point is close to the town of Islamabad, some twenty miles distant from Srinagar, and it is navigable for another sixty miles down to

Maramulla, where we remember its narrow torrential exit.

But what peace it is, after the dusty tonga journey, with the clank clank of the steel harness bar, and the perpetual urging on of the ponies, whom the driver alternately whacks and then cajoles by telling them they are the sons of princes!

Tonga journeys are cruel to any one with a tender heart. The only comfort is that the poor mouths which are so tugged at are tougher than our heart-strings. Some travellers need reminding of the hardships these ponies bear, especially during the busy entry and exodus into and from Kashmir. Five minutes' breathing and a kind pat, and a morsel of cake or sugar, will relax the strain a bit, and will, moreover, be an object lesson in kindness to animals, so much needed in the East.

But our particular pair of ponies are just over their journey (for this time we are going to finish the journey to Srinagar by boat from Baramulla), and have been led off with drooping heads and heaving sides for a rest and feed.

We are soon embarked on our small fleet of dungas, which are very comfortable. We have two for our party, another for a kitchen, and a fourth for the servants and our spare baggage. We pull the rush-mats down on the sunny side of the barge, and relapse into camp-chairs. Any one who is very tired may lie on a camp-bed, as there are two in each boat.

The plash plash of the water, and then its gurgle gurgle against the flat-bottomed dungas, act as a lullaby. Trail your fingers in the cool water, and let

its silky swish glide over them and refresh you, body and mind.

The river is about a hundred yards wide just round Baramulla, and not so very deep. A towing path runs along the flat banks on either side, and in an hour or two paddles are abandoned for a towing rope. By and by comes the cheery clink of cups, and the tea-tray is passed over from the kitchen boat. After tea some of us are inclined for a walk, and go ashore on the towing path. After supper we tie up for the night under some silvery green willow trees, and friendly lights twinkle and shimmer into golden ribbons in the dark water. These belong to other boating parties on our own level; then other lights above it, moon and stars, gradually add their welcome, and we are lulled to sleep on placid waters.

Sometimes the river is anything but gentle, for sudden storms arise, when no wise boatman will attempt to move. The flat boats are quickly swamped by a squall of wind, though they may weather the swift, smooth current of a flood.

Engineering in the old days presented as great difficulties as are met with now. The same problem worries engineers to-day which confronted the people of Kashmir many years ago.

The blocking of the narrow gorge of the Jhelum at Baramulla was once the occasion for the display of great ingenuity by a clever chief engineer in the days of King Avantivarma, before A.D. 900. He had no cranes or machinery with which to dislodge the boulders brought down by the flood, and unless they were removed worse disaster must ensue. Clever Suyya threw handfuls of rupees into the water,

advertising the fact that he had done so. Instantly scores of natives came running and flung themselves into the water, and in their efforts, diving and jostling and fighting one another for the sunk treasure, they moved the boulders, and the passage was once more freed and the flood saved.

And yet, floods notwithstanding, Kashmir owes everything to her abundant water supply. For though bread is the staff of life, water is almost more indispensable. The magnificent springs which issue from beneath the mountains in so many places are a source of life.

Among the most noted is the spring at Achibal, which is cold on the hottest day, a fact duly noticed and utilised by Nur Mahal, the wife of the Emperor Jehangir, and pressed into the service of her fountain grotto in the Mogul garden she laid out there.

The spring of deep blue water at Vernag, which gives rise to the Jhelum river, was the spot of all others to which the Emperor Jehangir implored to be carried when dying. There are other deep springs, and also some sulphurous and hot springs valuable for medicinal purposes.

The waters of the Jhelum can become turbulent and cruel when in flood. Every July the dykes which are intended to control the passage of the river at Srinagar are threatened by a swollen, surging mass of water. "Is the *bund* still holding?" telegraphs the anxious engineer. "What about the *bund*?" query those camping on the banks or still on the water.

In 1893 a great flood swept down in a solid wall of water, carrying away bungalows, bridges, and boats

in its progress. The lakes multiplied tenfold in extent, for the flat fields on either side of the valley were swamped.

This we can easily understand when we realise that the rivers and lakes are fed not only by gradually melting snows and gently trickling streams, but by sudden torrential rains which, as the common phrase runs, *burst* about the end of July.

Such energetic friction must, of course, wear down the strata, and the origin of rivers and valleys is therefore not hard to trace.

The rivers usually give their names to the valleys through which they flow. The Jhelum is the river Hydaspes of ancient Greek history, which was crossed by Alexander the Great. And to this day, wherever his progress touched its course, excavation produces Greek coins. Also, what is still more strange, stone sculptures of the head of Buddha with the true Grecian coiffure have been found.

Long before Alexander penetrated into Northern India the Jhelum was at work, hewing its way down, with the aid of winter snow and summer rainfall, from its source in the mountains till it widened out suddenly into the Wular lake—the largest lake in India—down between the great mountain ranges, till it was brought up by the narrow gorge below Baramulla.

But resistance only increased its design of finding a way to the sea, and again it fretted and foamed, sawed and cut, till it conquered the hard rock, and pursued its course more peacefully through the Panjab plains, finally broadening into the fine river over which our train thundered as we came up to

Rawal Pindi. How little you thought while hurriedly sipping a cup of watery tea at Jhelum railway station that you would follow that steamy, oily river up to its cool source in the mountains of Kashmir!

The Kishenganga, the Lidar, the Wardwan, the Pohro, and other smaller rivers all empty themselves finally into the Jhelum, which in mighty current carries great logs and planks of timber from the forests, which are cast on its broad bosom, till it finally deposits them on the Forest Department's beach at the town of Jhelum itself. They have had enough rough and tumble to at all events begin to season them by the time they get there.

All simple river life must have certain resemblances, and the flat boats and barges we meet being slowly propelled about the Kashmir rivers are not unlike the boats we see our own river-folk or bargees leisurely punting along at home. Habit becomes second nature, and we should cry out in alarm if we saw little land-lubbers risking all that water-babies are perfectly safe in doing. They climb about the boats, handle paddles as soon as they can paddle themselves, swim and bathe to their hearts' content, while their mothers wash clothes and pound grain and gossip. How often that little chap of seven guides our dunga whilst his father dozes lazily in the back cabin of the boat!

What fascinating sights we get as we glide along! Here are two women in their coarse woollen frocks, the long wide sleeves rolled back to the elbow, crushing the grain for the family meal of their households, much as a cook in a model kitchen works a pestle and mortar. The mortar in Kashmir is a large wooden

tub carved out of a section of a tree trunk, and the pestle is of heavy wood. The women wield the pestle in turns.

Here is a barge of fruit and walnuts slowly heaving into view, there a dredger, unpleasant work on any river. Now and then we see a few jolly little sand boys and girls playing on the bank. They are bent on some game very like our hop-scotch, and are letting their cows and goats wander off at their own sweet will. A scream from an angry mother weeding at some little distance soon sends one of them in pursuit, however.

After two days of this delightful river life we skirt the Wular lake, in which the view has widened out into grandeur ; for, as already mentioned, it is the largest lake in India.

Then again we follow the river still farther towards its source, and the third morning sees us glide gently up to Srinagar itself. Early sunshine gilds everything impartially, the tin roofs as well as the gold-lacquered ones. It flickers through the leaves of the willow trees which canopy the banks, and sparkles like diamonds on the rippling water.

All the same, we make for the deep shade of a group of noble plane trees which grip the shore so closely, and are quickly surrounded by little boat-loads of would-be salesmen. We cut the matter short by taking a card or address from each one, promising to make the round of their shops by and by, while we are already planning to visit the Dal lake with a picnic tea.

## CHAPTER IX

### Lakes and Floating Gardens

We think it will be far nicer to live in a house-boat during our stay in Srinagar, for the dungas are rather public for washing and dressing; so we leave our spare baggage in one, dismiss the other, and spread ourselves out, quite luxuriously it seems, in a roomy house-boat.

What a fleet we now have! But it is delightful. The servants are in great feather, and are looking forward to shopping expeditions of their own, which we know will soon result in a request for advance of wages.

Life in a Kashmir house-boat is very like a summer holiday spent in one on the Thames. But how infinitely more enchanting are our surroundings! We find no notice boards nailed up to bar our progress, and we are told that we may go and camp in one of the famous gardens, *baghs* as they are called.

Some of these gardens are famous on account of the royal heads which planned their planting. Nur Mahal, the beloved wife of the Mogul Emperor Jehangir, had evidently the gift of imagination when she superintended the laying out of marble terraces, plashing fountains, long canals, and stately

walks. And we breathe in old romance as we wander through the summer-houses with their black marble columns so richly carved. Great must have been the love of her royal husband in the indulgence of these plans of his beloved wife, for the marble hailed from Delhi, and the workmen too. That his love remained constant we are convinced by seeing merely a picture of the white marble tomb he erected to her memory—the Taj Mahal at Agra.

True gardeners and foresters must be possessed of imagination or else of deep unselfishness, for they can seldom hope to see the matured beauty of their cherished plans and planting. This is partly why such doings are ennobling, for they give of their best to future generations. The kind fairy, called Compensation, sees to it that they have a very fair share of the pleasure all the same. There is such intense delight in watching the growth in the concrete of one's abstract hopes. And so here we bow ourselves, under the shade of the plane trees in these lovely gardens, to the memory of her who planned them. The Shalimar and Nasim Baghs, and the Nishat or Garden of Gladness, have provided themes for many songs of sentiment and romance.

The Kashmiris love flowers, and, like the Japanese, have their spring expedition to view the blossom. They will go out *en masse* to the foot of the hill on which is the fort to admire the peach blossom, and again, later, on to the Nishat Bagh to visit the lilacs when in full bloom, just as Londoners go to Bushey Park on "Chestnut Sunday."

The Dal lake is one of the great attractions to Kashmir's visitors. The water is so clear that

the reflections of the surrounding mountains are perfect. Some of the photographs of the Dal lake are equally clear, whichever side you turn them. Chenars and willows, picturesque chalets, dark cypresses, blue distance, and snow mountains, make a picture hard to equal anywhere. Graceful little fishing-boats, called "*Shikharas*," skim about with sails like white wings.

This lake is not one sheet of water, but it is all the prettier for that reason. Little canals intersect the floating gardens and small islands, while villages and orchards are dotted about its banks, which cover about five miles in length and two in breadth.

Of the outlying lakes, Manasbal is quite lovely. It lies between the Sind river and the mountains, locked in and reached by a narrow channel through which only narrow boats can be piloted. It also has the remains of another Mogul garden.

The Wular lake has at its head the village of Bandipura, which is the point from which the road to Gilgit starts. This lake, in which the rivers Sind and Jhelum and other waters all mingle, is charming in spring and early summer, and again in late autumn, but it is very dangerous by reason of the swarms of mosquitoes during July, August, and September—indeed, we are wise to avoid all the waterways of Kashmir during these months.

Another lake of some interest is Gangarbal, which is cradled in the rocky centre of Haramouk, above the Wular lake. It lies at a height of 12,000 feet, and is held sacred by the natives, some of whom declare it to be the source of their holy river Ganges.

A unique and fascinating feature of the Dal lake consists in a series of floating gardens. Masses of weeds are woven into a kind of basket in which rich earth is placed, and melons, cucumbers, tomatoes, and purple egg plants flourish in them, needing no other water than that which their roots touch. And so they float in a tangled mass rich with colour. We constantly meet boat-loads of fruit and vegetables being piloted along the canals which interlace these gardens and the lake itself.

Modern gardening is not neglected in Srinagar, though there is nothing on the scale of the Empress Nur Mahal's stately pleasances. The pretty villas have delightful gardens, and that of the British Residency is charming, especially in spring and early summer; bright with many familiar flowers and shrubs, gay with birds, and, for a background, views of the everlasting hills and their purity.

As we have said, the Emperor Jehangir loved Kashmir, and took his queen there with him. We can picture the great cortège slowly wending its way through the burning Panjab plains, stopping at the rest-houses on the way. We can follow Jehangir in imagination as he reined in his horse with its gay saddle-cloth and trappings beside the curtained palanquin of Nur Mahal as they neared the top of the Pir Pangal Pass, and then commanding the bearers to pause, as he held back the curtain and bade her gaze on the grand view of snow mountains: those wonderful ranges of dazzling peaks and snow-fields, of which they were never to lose sight during the summer months spent in that happy retreat.

Imagine Nur Mahal and the ladies of her court

drawing their soft Indian shawls (woven in Kashmir and trophies of Jehangir's first visit) closer round their slender forms as the first mountain breezes met them. Think of the gorgeous state barge moored in waiting for the Imperial party beneath stately chenar trees and drooping willows; and of how Nur Mahal appreciated the beauties of her new country we have ample proof, for we see how she planted even the approach to Srinagar with royal avenues. And then what joy they must have had planning the lovely gardens, laying out terraces and stately walks, planting little cypress trees which were to become the sentinels of her fountains and marble summer-houses!

We can with reason imagine river trips and long summer evenings on the lakes, and moonlight nights under the clear skies, the snows silhouetted in soft "moonstone" blues, while the water's silver tinkle alone broke the stillness as the little waterfalls plashed over marble and fern grottos. Rich subject-matter for the writers of poetry and romance!

To breathe the air of Kashmir is to breathe poetry, and endless cantos could be sung by one capable of voicing her charm, her colour, her majesty, in verse. In the description of the colours of her scenery and flowers, even of her art, we must not forget the skies, for they are part of the pictures which artists have striven to paint.

The sunrises and sunsets are the occasion for such colouring, both rich and delicate, as few parts of the world, if any, can eclipse. Though alike in many effects, the opening and close of day have many contrasts too.

# Kashmir

When the sun rides over a mountain ridge in the East and floods the whole horizon with his glorious beams, he flings a dazzling veil over the grey garments of the dawn and instantly transforms the valley. The neutral sky becomes shot with rose and yellow; the sullen blue of the mountains and valleys turns to royal sapphire. The snows light up and sparkle and glisten. The rice-fields burst into vivid emerald, and the trees become alive with lights and mysterious shadows. The lakes gleam like cloth of silver, and in their still depths mirror forth in duplicate mountain and countryside. The rising sun goes forth to conquer by his light and warmth, eager for what the new day, untried and untarnished, will yield.

And the sunset paints for us the going to rest of the conqueror. In skies of saffron, banked with purple clouds, or soft with amethyst vapour, he seeks retirement. In a trail of crimson and gold he withdraws the magic of his presence. There is a veil of haze again, but this time it is mellowed with experience, and is golden rather than silver. Many things have been witnessed. Sorrow, sin, and suffering, as well as joy, and work, and beauty, have been found to exist even under those genial rays, and there is a suspicion of tears in the triumphant majesty and brilliance. The reflections are still faithfully rendered by peaceful lakes, but even in their peace there is pathos. A smile lingers, but there is pity in it.

And then Nature's tender voice calls all to rest, and she lays aside her coloured robes of day for night's soft trailing garments, and the moon sails out, and Kashmir sleeps.

## CHAPTER X

### The Valleys of Kashmir

The word valley has always a ring of charm about it. One instantly pictures a river winding through pretty country, and a walk running along that river. The valley of the Thames, for instance, though criticised by many people from a health point of view, is one of the most attractive of valleys.

But in our present trip we have to realise the difference in scale of the country. The whole of Kashmir proper is much larger than the extent of country called the valley of the Jhelum. Even this valley is split up again by other rivers into many other valleys, which take their names from the rivers which flow through them.

The ancient history of most valleys is that they were once lakes, and the old legend about Kashmir is that its vast lake was first of all drained of water by a grandson of the god Brahma, and that he then placed Brahmans there to cultivate and populate it, and that the rocky gorge at Baramulla was the lip of the vessel out of which he poured the waters. Such quaint ideas and superstitions are common to all unlettered people.

For instance, when the late Maharajah of Kashmir

died no one was allowed to fish, because, it was declared, the spirit of the Maharajah had gone into a fish. Unfortunately he was caught by some disobedient subject, and there was a fearful commotion.

The principal valleys in Kashmir are the Sind, the Lidar, the Wardwan, and the Lolab, though there are many more.

The Sind river flows through sixty miles of charming scenery, sometimes foaming along, or pressing through narrow channels, again widening out into placid reaches and winding through flowery meads with wooden huts dotted here and there.

This river rises in the Ladakh mountains, and, working its way down through the defile of the Zoji La at Baltal, flows through Sonamarg, and later on casts in its lot, as do the other Kashmir rivers, with the Jhelum.

Along the path which follows the course of the river we find the wild home of the raspberry and black-currant and gooseberry; but though to a wayfarer even such crude fruit is welcome, we cannot compare them with their cultivated step-brethren in our kitchen gardens.

As we ride or walk along the Sind valley through miles of grassy orchard-land, and rest beneath spreading walnuts, there seems to be a sense of homeliness and quiet country life, quite untouched by the roar and whirl of modern life, and a feeling of peace and content comes over us.

When travelling once, years ago, through this very valley, we put up for a night at a large wooden shelter which had been erected for native troops, but was still in the carpenters' hands. A wet day and

the absence of the workmen induced us to camp in it, and our camp-beds were put into a large room in which the kind person left in charge quickly spread a carpet of birch-bark. To weary feet the pearly satin of these sheets of paper-like substance was a cooling and healing touch, and so was the fragrant ozonous scent of the freshly sawn pine wood.

The Lidar valley is the next rival in our affection. The river has gradually slipped down from large glaciers, wanders through grassy uplands, through birch and pine forests, till it widens out at Eishmakam into a wide stretch. A rocky hill crowned with an old monastery is seen through the trees from the spreading walnut giant under whose branches we are encamped, and an old fakir has come trotting down with a basket of peaches and pears to offer us. We shall send him away happy with some tea and sugar in exchange.

To-morrow's march will take us fourteen miles to Pahlgam, a sanatorium of pine trees much liked for standing camps. The scenery grows wilder beyond that point, and one delightful diversion is to turn up a little side valley to Aru and on into the big forests at the foot of the Kolahoi peaks.

But the main branch of the valley leads on and up to Shisha Nag, and yet higher to Amarnath, famous for its sacred cave, to which thousands of pilgrims come every year. This is 13,500 feet above sea-level. The great pilgrimage takes place in August, and from every part of India all sorts of people bravely plod their way. It lies among steep rocks and bare greyish red limestone country, without trees, surrounded by towering peaks. There are splendid views of the Koh-i-nur mountains as neigh-

bouring peaks. A very poor stone statue of the sacred bull of Shiva, one of the Hindu gods, and some fluttering pigeons supposed to be the expression by the god that the pilgrimage is accepted, is the poor end to the weary marches of the pilgrims.

There is a passage (only passable at certain times of the year) not far from here between the two important valleys, the Lidar and the Sind.

The Wardwan river drains the Suru mountains and flows down the east side of Kashmir. Little farmsteads and peasants' huts stand in their fields on the banks of the river. In the autumn the harvesters shade curious eyes as we pass, and woollen-frocked children scream to each other and rush out, a band of merry faces. The valley is a high one, about 2000 feet, and is so beautiful that artists can find much to paint: chalet-like villages backed with dark forest slopes of pine, and brightened with the wonderful crimson millet and amaranth and bright pasture-land on each side of the river. Wooded knolls rise here and there, from which one gets a glimpse of the Kolahoi peaks.

The Lolab valley is chiefly attractive from its rural character. We might almost fancy here and there that we were camping on a Surrey common or among the hills of Berkshire. Regular villages and large barns add to the picturesque effect, and splendid groves of walnut trees are to be found at every stage. The river takes us through most beautiful country, now flat, now undulating, but shut in with fir forests, beyond which on one side we come close up to the grand barrier of the Kaj-i-Nag.

The whole of the valley is cultivated richly, for it

is a very easy matter to farm here. There is good soil and plenty of water; the sun never scorches, though it warms up in July and August. But we see the lazy character of the Kashmiris on every hand. Fences are made by supporting branches on forks of wood just as they are cut up; the villagers do not even trouble to drive the stakes into the ground.

Why should they trouble? they answer, when we ask why they don't make good fences and keep their houses and barns in better repair. There is plenty of food and firing and water, and they weave woollen garments from the long wool of their flocks of fat sheep.

One march nearing the end of the valley which leads us back towards Baramulla gives us a splendid view of Haramouk's rough old head. His coiffure is less snowy in the autumn, for hot sunshine during several months has clipped his white locks close; still, at whatever time and from whatever place he is seen, he is a fine old mountain, and any valley is the richer for a sight of him.

# CHAPTER XI

## Fruits and Forests—Flora and Fauna

The fruit of Kashmir is a great boon to Northern India as well as to itself. In the spring, the blossoms are exquisite additions to the countryside ; the plum-like driven snow, the fine cups of the pear flowers, the delicate tints of the apricot and apple, and the bright pink of almond and peach, defy any but a fairy pen to describe. The rich scent of young walnut leaves and clinging vines all rejoicing in spring sunshine after winter, bring delight even to a people who pay no attention to the grander beauties of Nature. Bright splashes of yellow show us where the mustard fields are, and delicate fields of blue flax and linseed march with them.

In the autumn we may meet strings of bullock carts slowly wending their way down to the Panjab with fragrant loads of apples. The fruit generally lacks the flavour of English-grown fruit, probably because it ripens too quickly and because pruning is not properly understood. No native of India or Kashmir understands using the knife, and roses and fruit trees lose their quality quickly in consequence. Their usual method of pruning is to clip the branches level, ignorant of whether they are destroying new

wood and fruiting buds. But European supervision has now been introduced and the cultivated fruit is fast improving. Vines are grown too, but the grapes are not thinned and are usually gathered unripe—a most disappointing shock when we see the splendid basketfuls displayed for sale. A light country wine, both red and white, is made, very like foreign *vin ordinaire*, but it will not travel well, and cannot be exported any distance.

Mulberries are largely cultivated, for food for man and beast, but especially for the sake of seri-culture or silk-spinning. Walnuts and water-nuts (*zinghara*) are grown for food. The former are stored in large wooden barns. The fresh walnuts are creamy and delicious. They are also exported; the best kind is called *khagus*, or paper, as its shell crushes like paper in the hand. The zinghara grows on the Wular lake for miles. It is a black nut with a hard spiked shell. The people also eat a great many wild herbs and roots and fungi.

The trees of Kashmir are one of its finest features, from the avenues of poplar which marshall the roads into Kashmir, to the graceful birches which, notwithstanding their apparent fragility, are the hardiest and highest growing of all the trees.

The deodar, or Himalayan cedar, is a fine tree, and grows from 4000 to 9000 feet above sea-level. But the trees which always stand out in one's memory are the splendid plane or *chinar*, although walnuts run them hard as to size and shade. Then there are ash, maple, sycamore, elm, and many varieties of pine and fir. The scent of the pines when the sun shines after rain makes us draw in breath after breath of

their healthful fragrance. There are plenty of small fry in the way of trees too, hazel and hawthorn, and in some valleys rhododendrons with their rich colour.

There are not only countless sorts of trees, but in the higher valleys we have the lovely park-land with its spreading trees and woods, and on the slopes of the mountains we can lose ourselves in vast forests, where the tree trunks tower above us.

Can we not trace here the first conception of temples and cathedrals ? A wonderful and sacred silence impresses us as we wander through these solemn aisles, and gaze at their columns and arches, and the delicate tracery of their branches.

Certainly the ideas for the temple he wished to build for the God of Israel came to King David in this way, for he vowed that he could not rest " until I find out a place for the temple of the Lord, and an habitation for the mighty God" ; adding later, " We found it in the *wood*."

On the way to the forests we pass through lighter woods and glades, where wild roses and honeysuckle and jasmine pour out their sweetness. The flowers of Kashmir are one of its chief joys, at all events to us who love flowers. The beautiful lotus flower spreads its rose and white petals like a floating carpet on the lakes, in company with white and yellow water-lilies. From these royal flowers down to the tiniest alpine blossom pressing close to mother earth's bosom the flowers are legion.

In the early spring hosts of mauve primulas like cowslip balls, and more delicate pink ones, purple and white anemones and bright little gentians, bring colour to the bare spaces left by melting snow even before

the grass springs green; and while this goes on all over the slopes of the mountains, the valley bursts into blue and mauve irises, and white and gold narcissus and crocus, and pink tulips shake their dainty heads.

The wood of the deodar is used for building purposes, and the beautifully carved pillars in the temples were always made from it. So also are boats; but the forests have been used up near Srinagar, and the expense of bringing the timber from the more distant forests is great. It is the same with walnut wood, which is used for furniture, gun-stocks, etc. The wood of the ash is used for boat-paddles and ploughs. Fibre is grown for mats, rope, and the string used for fishing-nets, and the willow withies are used for baskets.

There is a great deal of tanning and dyeing with bark; also a strong paper is made from birch bark, but it has rather a shiny surface and is not very lasting for records, as writing can easily be erased with water. It is almost waterproof, and is used instead of glass in the windows during the winter.

We trace the homes of many an English garden favourite to the Himalayas. Botanists have sent home seeds and roots, and horticulturists have educated the rather puny (in some cases) little blossoms till they are proud to print them in seed catalogues. We find irises, wall-flowers, tulips, pinks, pansies, forget-me-nots, campanulas, monkshood, larkspur, sunflowers, marigolds, columbines, canterbury bells, thrift, rock-rose, potentilla, daisies, bugloss, ranunculus, saxifrage, poppies, balsams, orchis, wild rose, clematis, lords-and-ladies, mallows, marsh-marigolds, and anemones, as well as all the alpine flowers.

And again Kashmir possesses the wild flowers of our own fields, such as thyme, mint, rest-harrow, hawklit, bright-eye, speedwell, campions, buttercups, and daisies. But it seems impossible to exhaust the list, though we naturally are able to place the flowers in their proper seasons, for they do not all bloom at the same time. Sometimes we read descriptions of flowers in books such as this: "Tall Madonna lilies sheltered humble primroses, and flaunting hollyhocks were surrounded by curtseying violets," showing that the writer, however he or she might love flowers, was ignorant of their habits.

Imagine the delight of walking barefoot through a meadow of cool, thick grass with large edelweiss and blue gentians, and of counting as many as fifty different flowers in one day's walk! There is a wonderful sky-blue poppy to be found in the Wardwan valley.

The sad part very often to would-be botanical collectors is that the time to take seed of any new or rare plant is very seldom the time one is in Kashmir, for plants cannot be taken up or moved with any safety when in bloom.

Kashmir has always been noted for its good sport, and there are still noble animals living in a natural state on the slopes of its mountains, even high up in country so austere that one wonders how they can find food.

In the highest parts of all we come across marmots, quaint little beasts which utter shrill cries. They have thick reddish brown fur, and live in the rocks. They look so amusing sitting up on their strong hind-legs, and vanish into their holes in a twinkling when

they catch sight of any one. A dachshund of mine once pursued a marmot down into a hole in the rocks, and then found he couldn't turn his long body to get out. We heard piteous cries, and at last dug him out; but mother marmot had tried to teach him to mind his own business by biting the tip off his nose.

Ibexes, with their fine long horns, live among very steep rocks too; so do markhor, the great mountain goats with long beards and horns. Thar is another kind of mountain goat, found in the Pir Pangal and Kaj-i-Nag. Snow-leopards are in the high ground of forests; ordinary leopards and black bears are common everywhere. The bears love walnuts and maize, and when the nuts and crops are ripe they come down and forage for themselves, and many a peasant has disfiguring scars from the smacks he has received. Wolves and foxes and wild dogs are in the hills too, and also a splendid animal on the forest hills called the bara singh, or great red-deer. The gooral, a kind of chamois, makes his home in hot cliffs on river banks. Red bears are less common than in past years.

There are monkeys in most of the low forests, chattering as they swing from bough to bough, just as excited at the sight of our dogs as the dogs are at seeing them.

The musk deer is a graceful creature as far as its shoulders, with lovely velvety eyes and soft ears and nose, but it increases in size behind the shoulders, and has big hind-legs and coarse hair.

Fish are a very useful element of food to the natives of Kashmir, from the great mahseer, coarse to eat if exciting to catch, to the numerous small fry caught in the rivers.

Trout preserving is making headway now under European guidance, and the fat speckled fellows lie up as comfortably under willow trees in their new homes as in any stream in the British Isles. The goose and duck shooting is excellent in the late autumn and cold weather, also chikor, a kind of partridge. There are other varieties of both partridge and pheasant. The monal pheasant has beautiful plumage, and the kaklass is another kind.

There are pigeons, green, blue, and grey, in every wood, and cooing doves and cuckoos bring back home woods to our minds. Hosts of little birds, all familiar to us, are to be seen, as well as brilliantly coloured ones like the golden oriole, the paradise fly-catcher, with its floating tail like silver ribbon; the kingfisher, with turquoise-blue back and orange breast; the hoopoo, with its fanlike feathers and head cockade.

The birds of Kashmir have a very happy existence, and we are reminded, when we think of long hot weary days spent in the plains by those who would fain fly to such a paradise as Kashmir, of the cry of the Psalmist king who put his longing into poetic words, "O for the wings, for the wings of a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest."

No more perfect country has been provided by Nature than this valley where larks poise high, trilling out their praise, where doves coo in sweet content, and where great Lammergeier eagles sail in powerful majesty.

## CHAPTER XII

### Camp Life in Kashmir

The very phrase "going into camp" gives one a pleasing thrill. People who have never slept outside four walls have missed a great deal, and are advised to do their best to sleep in a tent, even if it is only by riverside or moor or park. But wild camping when one is far away from modern civilisation is at the same time more delightful and more difficult. Going into the wilds entails knowledge and forethought, or our expedition may turn out a failure indeed.

Before camping in the Kashmir valley we have to visit one of the general provision shops which are on the riverside. We moor our boat to the bank, and have quite an amusing hour picking out our groceries (which we must cut low unless we are rich globe-trotters), also a small share of precautionary medicines, writing-paper, bootlaces, and little odds and ends, perhaps even some good old homely butter-scotch and bull's-eyes.

We see the things packed into our *kiltas*, the leather-covered baskets which are made in Kashmir and are shaped like barrels. When the lids are padlocked some responsible person takes the keys and we convey the *kiltas* back to our boat.

We have already hired tents and camp furniture and engaged servants, having only brought the *bearer* with us. He is a capital person at making what is called a *bundobast*, an arrangement; and, like all Panjabi servants, he is very happy at coming to Kashmir, the land of milk and honey, and fruit and firewood.

We have brought books and sketching materials, and cameras too, as we shall need plenty of resources to fall back on for wet days. For the women-folk, sewing and knitting correspond to the soothing influence of smoking for the men; for boys and girls scrap-book diaries, a game or two, as well as books. Undiluted views and joys of the wild, even when well punctuated by meals, marching, and sleep, are apt to pall sometimes, and the mind needs feeding as well as the senses. Besides, days must come in camp when all is not delightful—rain and wind, heat and cold—and so we will guard against any possibility of getting bored or regretting we came.

The pack ponies (for there is no wheeled traffic or real roads on the Kashmir side of Srinagar) are to meet us at Ganderbal, at the head of the Sind river, about fourteen miles from Srinagar. This is also a favourite camping-ground, though we personally mean to camp in the Chinar Bagh on our way back, and must not delay now.

Several white tents gleam amongst the trees, and under a large willow tree Rahim Ali, our bearer, points out proudly the result of his *bundobast*, for there are the ponies awaiting us. The servants are soon busy carrying off the baggage and sorting it into loads. Sometimes an unwilling pony backs away from the

loaders, and they tumble head over heels with the rolls of tents, while the triumphant creature canters away with a whinny and rolls over and over on the grass. He is soon recaptured, and this time there is to be no nonsense. Two men hold his head and one his tail, while two more shift and bind his load. The silly thing doesn't mind a bit really, and begins to crop grass, paying no heed whatever to the bundles on his back.

Mule- and pony-men invariably start by giving trouble, and perhaps, not yet knowing the Kashmiri, we are taken in by the piteous plea that the animals will be killed and we shall have to replace them—yes, each pony is worth fifty to a hundred rupees, and so on. But at this critical moment up comes a kind Samaritan in the person of a veteran traveller. He takes in the situation instantly, and turning to the head-man utters one laconic order, "*Lado*," which means "Load up."

Without a word, but with tears in his eyes, which soon increase to sobs, he waves his satellites into submission, and in a few minutes, after grateful thanks to our unknown friend, we start, with a rattling of pails and empty kerosene oil tins and kettles to cheer us on.

These empty tins are indispensable to every household in India which indulges in baths, for the hot water is boiled in them, and for cold water carriers they are clean and capacious. The tears of the pony-men were crocodile tears. They knew perfectly well that the loads were moderately sized up, and that even so two spare ponies were engaged in case of a sore back or other casualty. But we shall

soon cease worrying over Kashmiri tears. They spring too easily, and these fine big men are sure to cry again before the day is over. It will be too hot, or it will rain, or they will be tired and cannot collect wood. Poor things, one has still to pity them, for their weak, cringing characters come from the many generations, indeed centuries, of tyranny under which they have suffered; and to resist all authority, and weep if they cannot resist it successfully, is part of their nature now.

A modest request when we reach the first village to the *lumbadar* or head-man that he will provide chickens, eggs, and milk meets, perhaps, with the assurance that there are none. This village is so poor that the people themselves have no food, we are told. And this with fowls scratching and clucking, and a mooing of cows just coming home to be milked! On one such occasion, when camping in Kashmir, we failed to move the *lumbadar*, a great fine man with a big black beard, snowy turban, and white clothes. He just sat himself down under the spreading walnut tree, and with folded arms watched our discomfiture.

But one of our staff, a Gurkha orderly, crept off round the tree with a pony's food pail in his hand. Filling this at the spring, and before we could speak, he emptied it over the head of the *lumbadar*. The effect of the pail fitting like an extinguisher was so funny, and the damage so slight, that we laugh still when we recall that scene. Coughing and spluttering, the man threw himself on to the ground, yelling out that he was killed. Other men rushed up and joined their cries that he was killed, without doubt *killed*.

(Kashmiris certainly seem to consider bathing a danger to health!) As they all cried and sobbed together they rubbed the *lumbadar* vigorously from head to foot. At last, with deep groans, he sat up, and with tears rolling down his cheeks ejaculated that we might have whatever we wanted. The villagers dispersed to procure farm produce such as we stood in need of. Before we parted, the price of these luxuries and a small "tip" in his hand to make up for the shower-bath, we conversed cheerfully with the *lumbadar*. He inquired our route, told us plenty of provisions could be obtained (from his neighbours), and even escorted us a hundred yards or so on our way, with a retinue of villagers and children. Thus the Kashmiri.

There are such endless tours through the happy valley that it is better for an intending traveller to consult a guide-book. We can here only give specimens of the charm of camp life.

The two favourite valleys to visit are the Sind and the Lidar, and we have already seen these in the description of the valleys. So we will now talk only about the actual life in camp.

The first day, perhaps, we feel stiff and tired, for we have not braced up our muscles by life on board ship or in the train and tonga. Every day, however, that we go to bed almost with the sun and get up perhaps before he does, leaves us better and brighter. The perfect scenery and scents, the picturesque sights and country sounds of this simple life, act as a charm to body and soul. The first night in camp stands by itself, perhaps. We do not fall asleep quickly. To ears accustomed to noises,

such as passing wheels and shutting doors, common to a house at nightfall, there seem to be hosts of strange and mysterious sounds. For there is no silence in Nature except in a desert. We hear her breathing, gentle as it is. The sound of the pine trees is like distant lapping of waves on a silver shore. Every now and then there is the sleepy twitter of a bird or gentle hoot of an owl, and a cool breath of fragrance wafts from jasmine and musk roses and newly trodden grass where our camp has invaded the grassy glade.

Now and then a moth flutters to our camp lanterns, but harmlessly, for they are turned low. In the distance camp-fires still burn bright, and dark figures are silhouetted against them as the natives cook their evening meal. Let us hope the wind is the right way for us, for we can spare them the odour of their *ghi*, or butter, as it cooks. The bark of a dog guarding a peasant's hut makes our dogs mutter a sleepy challenge, but they are too tired to bark.

Gradually the fires die out. The forms lately gathered round them are satisfied, and are now rolled inside their blankets something like Bologna sausages, for neither head nor feet are visible. And then comes with deeper silence that strange sense of aloofness. One is alone, and yet feels nearer, perhaps, than one has ever felt to the Universal Heart of Love which broods over all, wise and unwise, just and unjust, full of pity and protection and yearning; able to bear the sorrowful and sinful stumblings of these children through the knowledge that it has bestowed eternal life, and that they

are learning by slow degrees to tread the path of life.

The stars twinkle a welcome to another child of earth who has come to sleep under their lofty skies, and the well-known "Ursa Major" and his attendant stars twinkle the friendly message, "We are watching over the friends in the West too"; and as we sigh, "How I wish they were here too!" the first night in camp ushers one by a new door into the well-known Land of Nod.

The next thing we know is less enchanting—the stern bearer's voice rousing us for the early march as he pushes a tray with our morning tea and toast under the flap of the tent. It was not easy to rouse from the deep sleep we were wrapped in. We are stiff and achy, and the morning is chilly. Washing and dressing are performed in a very limited space, the former rather in the "lick an' a promise style" for which we were chastised by old nursery goddesses in the old days. We lace our dusty boots—no time to clean them till we reach our standing camp—and a little crossly emerge on grass drenched with dew. In a twinkling the good camp servants have our tents down, and we are told breakfast has been taken on to half-way.

So we start our march before the first sunbeam has found its way over the tops of the hills. The dogs race ahead. They have long chafed to be off. The river flows along in swift current, here and there churned up into a creamy lather by rocks lying in silent brown pools under bending willows, while silvery bays of sand are dotted about with flowering rushes under banks of wild roses and honeysuckle.

A bend in the river brings us round a cliff, and there, spread out before us, is a valley already flooded on one side with golden sunshine. Cheerful sounds reach us of cattle being driven out to pasture, and a shepherd's reed flute shows that some of them are already up the hillside. Another bend of the path and we come upon a sight at which we draw breath. There is a great snow mountain. A veil of golden haze cast over its crest, garments of sparkling white, a soft blue in the folds, with deeper sapphire blue velvet wrappings shading into cool grey—for the sun has not yet reached the deep valleys—is a sight to repay us for our early start.

Sometimes we make a standing camp in a lovely centre, such as Sonamarg or Pahlgam, and dismiss our pack ponies. There are endless excursions in all directions to occupy at least a month. Days in the deep shady forests, or fishing in the river. Days in the jungle for sportsmen after bear. Days with camera and sketch-book for those who wish to carry away mementoes of these happy hours. Rambling walks for the botanist and butterfly collector. And health and spirits improving with each of these happy hours.

Of course there is a shady side to every street, and camp life is not always perfect. Hot, long marches over stony paths or hills; rainy days, when everything is soaked, and the servants seem to lose their wits and we our tempers, must come occasionally. But the memory of them does not linger as the golden days do even after years have passed. In such a country of mountains, forests, rivers, lakes, valleys and gardens, woodland glades, and flowers and fruits, is it any

wonder that they should so linger, served up with such a climate? Is it any wonder that we should again look forward with joy to visiting a country which, to us fortunate visitors, is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever?

*Printed by*
MORRISON & GIBB LIMITED
*Edinburgh*